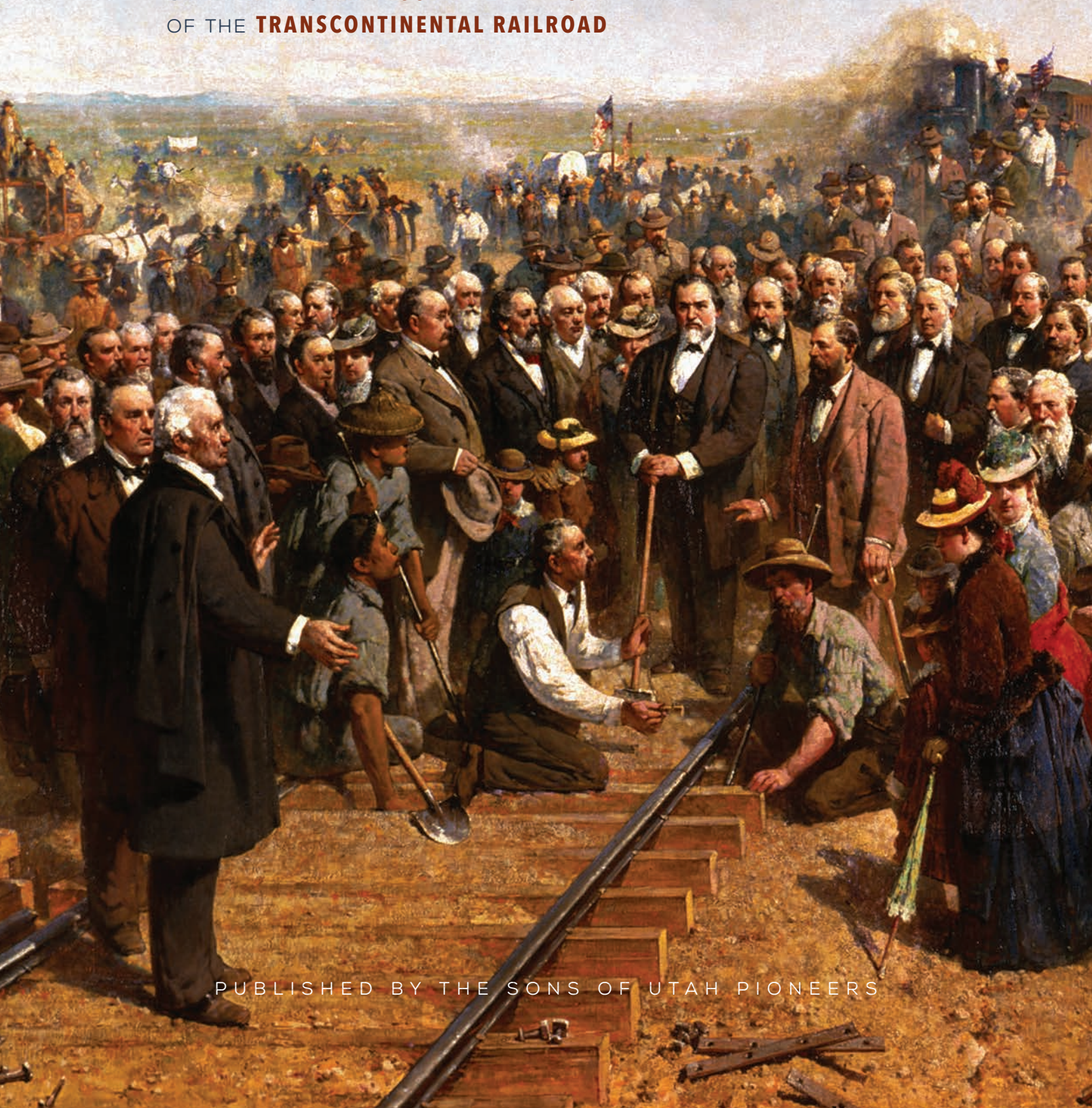


2019 • VOLUME 66 • NUMBER 3

PIONEER

CELEBRATING THE **150TH ANNIVERSARY**
OF THE **TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD**



PUBLISHED BY THE SONS OF UTAH PIONEERS

PIONEER



COVER: *THE DRIVING OF THE LAST SPIKE* BY THOMAS HILL, COURTESY THE CALIFORNIA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM, CIRCA 1881.

FEATURES

- 2** Utah and the Transcontinental Railroad, *by Wayne K. Hinton*
- 8** We Want the Railroad: Brigham Young's Role in Bringing the Railroad to Utah, *by Elder Steven E. Snow*
- 20** Spanning the Nation: Brigham Young and the Construction of the Transcontinental Railroad, *by Thomas G. Alexander*
- 40** Connecting East and West: The South's Missed Opportunity, *by Marko Demonja*
- 50** The Construction and Development of Utah's "Mormon Railroads," *by Wayne K. Hinton*



- 58** John Sharp: Railroad Pioneer, *by Bob Folkman*
- 62** The Denver and Rio Grande Western: The Only Railroad in the World, *by Ronald G. Watt*
- 68** Expo, 2019, *by Erin Berrett*

DEPARTMENTS

- 1** **President's Message:**
by Tony Tidwell
- 19** **Deseret Views:** CPRR Chinese Encampment, *by Ken Baxter*
- 39** **Pioneer Vignettes:**
William G. Smith
Lizzie Weaver Brown
Utah Division of State History

LEFT: THE LAST SPIKE FOR THE UTAH CENTRAL RAILROAD WAS DRIVEN ON JANUARY 10, 1870. CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM COLLECTION. SEE PAGE 50.

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THE PIONEER VALUES: We honor the pioneers for their faith in God, devotion to family, loyalty to church and country, hard work and service to others, courage in adversity, personal integrity, and unyielding determination.

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One hundred fifty years ago, on May 10, 1869, the driving of the Golden Spike united a country from

East to West, fulfilling the dream of a transcontinental railroad. The date also marks the end of the first twenty-two years of Utah pioneer history that the Sons of Utah Pioneers is dedicated to preserving and honoring.

To help celebrate that historic day, this past spring the Sons of Utah Pioneers organized a symposium at our headquarters building in Salt Lake City about the construction and completion of the great transcontinental railroad. Four speakers with a deep understanding of railroad history helped attendees more completely grasp the nuances of the politics, engineering, and human resources that made the feat possible. We learned that it took courage for the investors as well as the laborers to accomplish their tasks and complete the first transcontinental railroad in the world. By the time the last speaker finished his session, many of us felt like eight-year-olds again, playing with our Lionel train sets.

Our keynote speaker was Elder Steven R. Snow, Church Historian, who described the pivotal roles that Brigham Young and Utah Saints played in this historical drama. Utah's early leaders had

been some of the first to lobby for the railroad, and many Utahns were deeply involved in its construction. Speakers at the symposium recalled the men of vision and courage who explored and surveyed routes across plains and through mountains, the obedient and hardworking pioneers who sacrificed backbreaking labor to build the grades and trestles, and the powerful moguls and political leaders who provided the money and ambition necessary to the railroad's completion.

In addition to the significance of the transcontinental link, the importance of the Utah Central Railroad to the pioneer settlements in Utah cannot be overstated. Elder Snow brought the original silver spike and hammer used in the symbolic joining of the Utah Central line to the transcontinental railroad. With one swing of this hammer, Utah emerged out of obscurity to play an important role on the national stage.

In this quarter's *Pioneer* we present articles based on lectures from the symposium. We are proud of this issue, and we hope it will pique your interest and encourage further study as you begin to learn how this incredible feat changed Utah and the nation forever. ▣

ANTHONY C. TIDWELL
SUP NATIONAL
PRESIDENT 2019

"Crews working their way westward from Omaha, Nebraska for the Union Pacific Railroad Company consisted largely of Irish emigrants who had escaped the devastating Irish potato famine of the 1850's. Once the tracks were spiked into place, the men who performed the act of packing ballast between the ties and under the tracks were called 'gandy dancers.'"

—Edward Fraughton

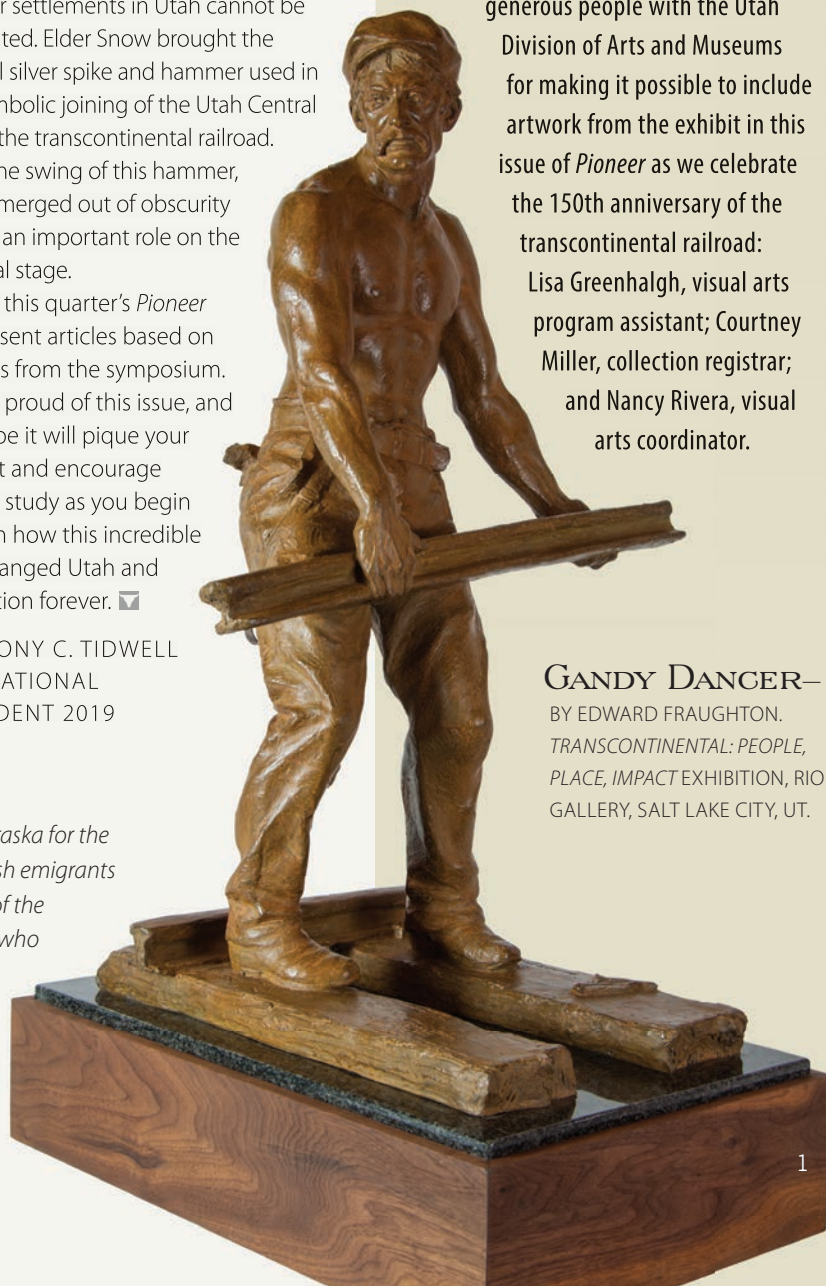
SPECIAL THANKS

From March through June of 2019 the Utah Division of Arts and Museums sponsored the *Transcontinental: People, Place, Impact* Exhibition held at the Rio Gallery in Salt Lake City. Co-curated by Felicia Baca and Amanda Moore, the exhibit featured thirty-five artists who live in or have significant ties to Utah. We wish to thank the following

generous people with the Utah Division of Arts and Museums for making it possible to include artwork from the exhibit in this issue of *Pioneer* as we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the transcontinental railroad: Lisa Greenhalgh, visual arts program assistant; Courtney Miller, collection registrar; and Nancy Rivera, visual arts coordinator.

GANDY DANCER—

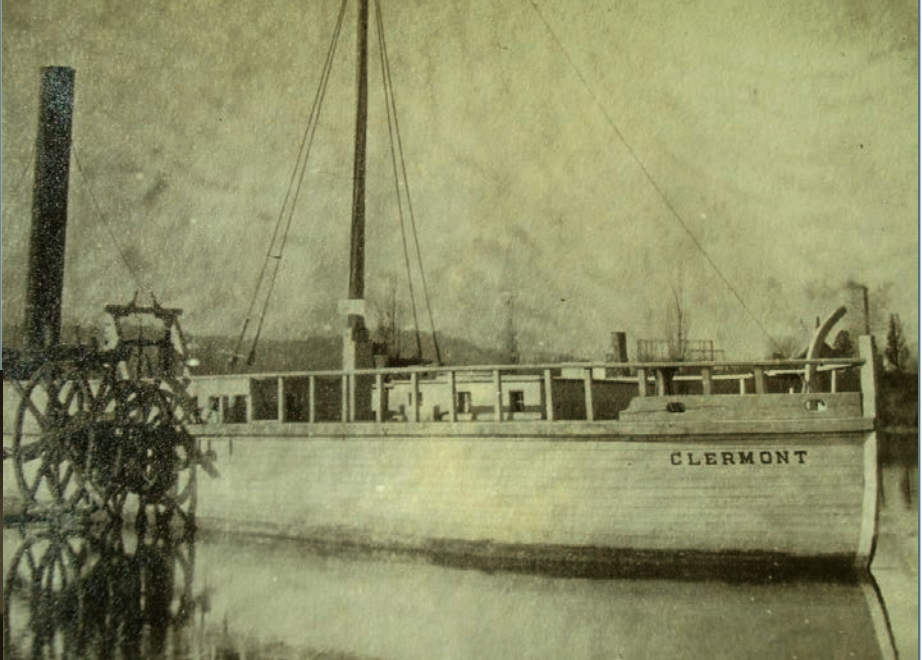
BY EDWARD FRAUGHTON.
TRANSCONTINENTAL: PEOPLE, PLACE, IMPACT EXHIBITION, RIO GALLERY, SALT LAKE CITY, UT.



UTAH AND THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD



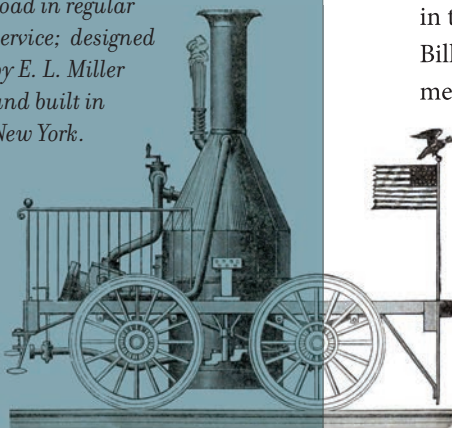
George Stephenson,
the British
“FATHER OF
RAILWAYS”



THE ROCKET,
designed by son, Robert
Stephenson, was the winner
in the locomotive trials held
at Rainhill in 1829

THE BEST FRIEND OF CHARLESTON

—the first to pull a train of
cars over an American rail-
road in regular
service; designed
by E. L. Miller
and built in
New York.



BY WAYNE K. HINTON
SUP President-Elect

Until October 12, 1807, there had been few major advancements in transportation since the refinement of ships and chariots by the ancient Greeks. But on that October day, Robert Fulton made his maiden steamboat trip up the Hudson River with his small boat, the *Clermont*. Little did anyone of the era realize just how dramatically steam power would revolutionize transportation.

It was only a matter of time before steam was being used to power other vehicles and machines. The first steam locomotive which could pull heavy loads at advanced speeds was pioneered by George Stephenson, the British “Father of Railways,” in 1829. The next year the first American train, *The Best Friend of Charleston*, made its debut. Humans were beginning to make dents in the obstacles of time and space.

Five years later, at the end of 1834, there were 762 miles of railroad track in the United States. By 1864, when the first rails of the transcontinental line were being laid, there were 33,850 miles of track—all of it east of the Missouri River.¹

For almost thirty years farseeing individuals had clamored for a railroad running from the Pacific to the Atlantic. On June 20, 1862, in the midst of the Civil War, Congress passed the Pacific Railroad Bill authorizing a railway running from Omaha, Nebraska, to Sacramento, California—almost 2,000 miles. President Lincoln signed the legislation on July 1, 1862.²

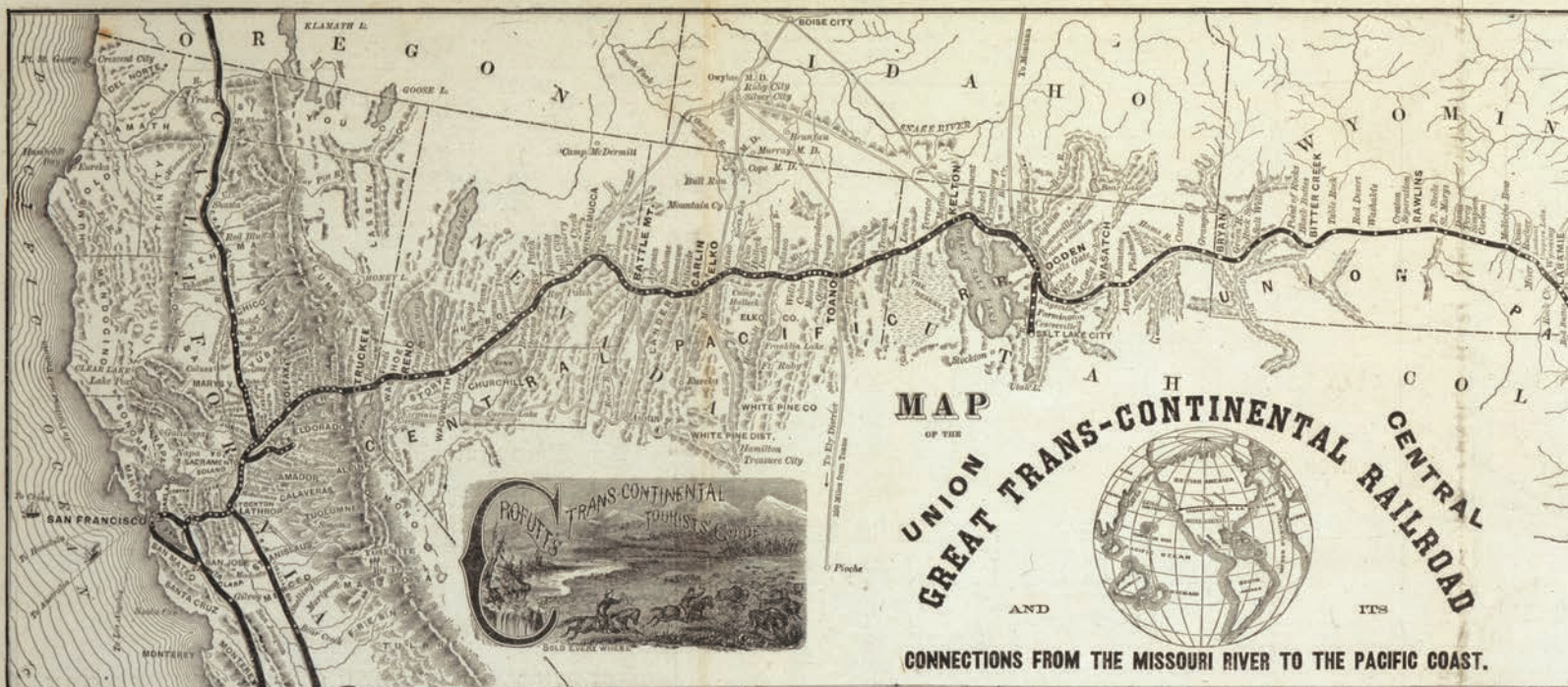
This bill was complicated and later required amending. It provided that Central Pacific begin building from Sacramento eastward and that Union Pacific build westward from Omaha. Each company was to receive 6,400 acres of public-domain

land per mile of track laid (as it turned out, the companies received nearly 12,000 acres of land per mile of track). They would also receive government bonds at \$16,000 per mile of track laid on flat land, \$32,000 a mile for track in foothills, and \$48,000 a mile for track in mountainous terrain. Land would also be given the two companies for building stations, machine shops, and other necessary structures. The bonds were a loan, not a gift, and it was expected that the companies would sell the land grants and bonds and would repay the government all principal and interest within thirty years. The bill specified that if the railroad were not completed by July 1, 1876, the companies would forfeit all land, track, and labor.³

The construction of the transcontinental line was the biggest building project of the nineteenth century. Stretching across major mountain ranges—the Sierra Nevadas, the Wasatch, and the Rockies—the railroad was an amazing engineering feat. But it was also a profound testament to the indomitable human spirit of thousands of Chinese and Irish immigrants, young Civil War veterans, and working-class whites who, equipped only with picks, shovels, hammers and sledgehammers, axes, hand saws, manual drills, and black powder, cleared hundreds of miles of railbed of rocks

and trees, cut away mountain faces, blasted out tunnels, and spanned gorges with enduring bridges. Relying solely on muscle power and ingenuity, the men ensured that rails laid across mountains and over deep ravines and canyons were as strong and lasting as those laid on arid, sandy plains. To prevent flooding, the men built the grade of the railbed at least two feet higher than the surrounding terrain, and to create safe mountain passes they carved out twelve-foot ledges. The labor was not only backbreaking but life-threatening, and hundreds died. Casualties were especially frequent among those working on the Central Pacific line.⁴

As each section of railway was planned and built, surveyors went out first to establish general route and grade. Then came the engineers, who determined the exact specifications of the line. Bridge gangs followed the engineers, and then came the men responsible for digging the cuts and for dumping dirt and rock to make necessary fills. Men doing the final grading followed, ensuring the standard of all cuts and fills and matching their work precisely to the grades of all bridges. And then came the tie layers—who laid 2,250 ties per mile—and the track layers who, after placing the rails,



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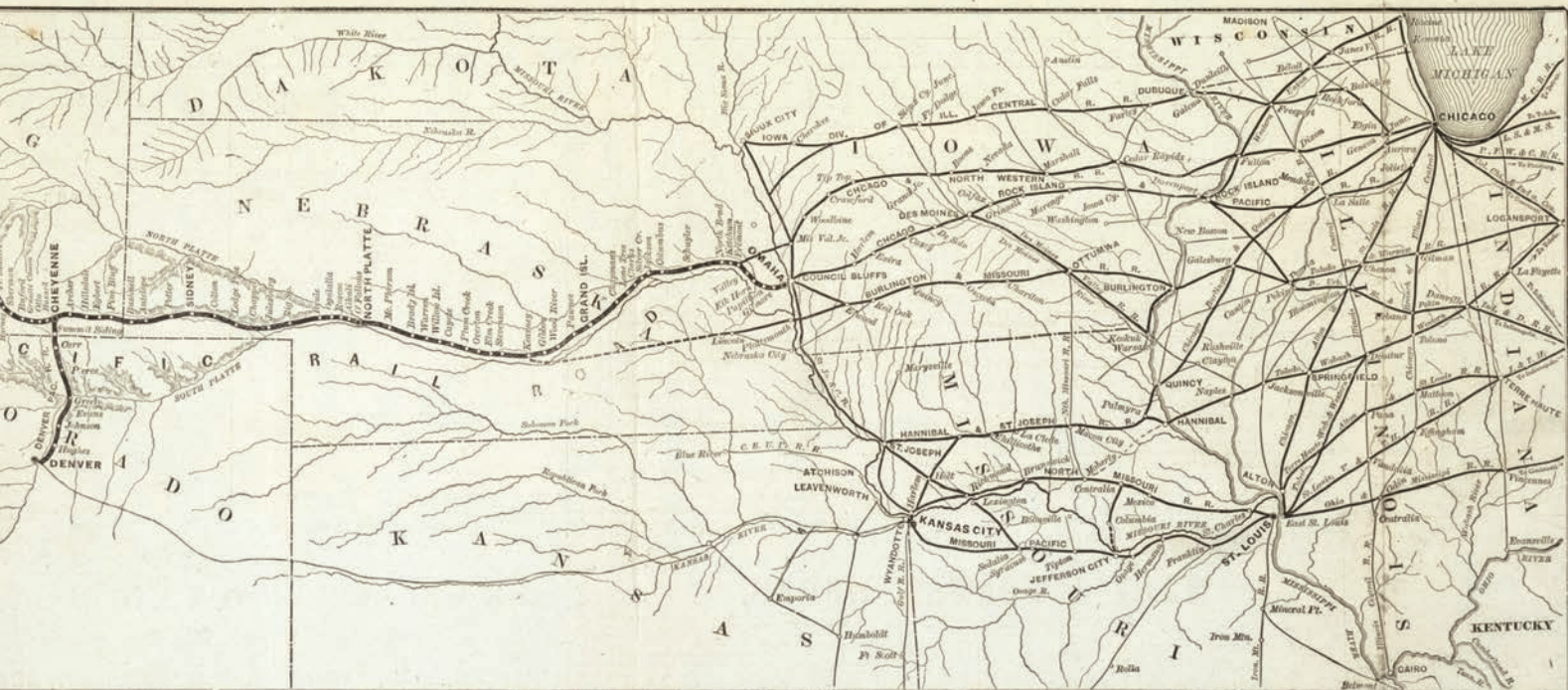
ON JUNE 20, 1862, IN THE MIDST OF THE CIVIL WAR, CONGRESS PASSED THE PACIFIC RAILROAD BILL AUTHORIZING A RAILWAY RUNNING FROM OMAHA, NEBRASKA, TO SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA.

MAP OF TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD, COURTESY CALIFORNIA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

ABOVE ART BY JOHN A. MCQUARRIE. "SPIKE 150: HELPER AND THE RAILROAD," EXHIBIT, ANNE JESPERSEN FINE ARTS GALLERY.

used their fishplates, distance markers, sledgehammers, and ballast to position and drive about 10,000 spikes per mile. Last were the carpenters, who built roundhouses, depots, storage sheds, and other service buildings for each station on the line.⁵

Because Salt Lake City was the only primary settlement between California and Nebraska, perhaps it was to be expected that a portable shanty town sprang up at the end of each track. Known as "Hell-on-Wheels," each town moved as its respective track advanced. The shanty-town idea originated at North Platte, Nebraska, which, almost overnight, was transformed from a small village into a city of 5,000 to accommodate the rail laborers. But as the rails



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"KRUPP"
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LAP-WELDED BOILER TUBES,
EXPANDERS,

stretched further and further west from North Platte, it lost its appeal and was replaced by a moving shanty town replete with canvas-tent and plain-board gambling dens, houses of prostitution, taverns, music and dance halls, hotels, and restaurants—each managed by its own carnivalesque entrepreneur. Capable of being taken down and set up in a day, the shanty towns were described as being “by day disgusting, by night dangerous.”⁶

In the summer of 1866 Congress approved an amendment to the railroad bill which allowed Central Pacific to continue to survey and construct its railway eastward in a continuous line until it met and connected with the Union Pacific line. The amendment initiated a race through Utah with a land grant of 12,000 acres per mile and government bonds as the prize. One wasteful result of this race was the cutting and filling of many miles of parallel grade through northern Utah.⁷

The contest effectually ended on April 9, 1869, when Grenville Dodge of Union Pacific and Collis Huntington of Central Pacific met in Washington, DC, and agreed that Central Pacific would buy Union Pacific track between Promontory Summit and Ogden. Later that very evening, Congress passed a joint resolution (1) designating the company terminus of Union Pacific and Central Pacific as being at or near Ogden, (2) stipulating that Union Pacific build and Central Pacific pay for and take ownership of the railway between the terminus at Ogden and Promontory Summit, and (3) dictating that the rails officially meet and join at Promontory, forming one continuous line.⁸

Brigham Young and the Saints played a major role in building the Utah segments of both the Union Pacific and Central Pacific lines. Young recognized the potential benefits of the railroad to Latter-day Saint immigration, trade, and self-sufficiency, and he desired that the Church have a voice in planning the railroad and that Church members enjoy benefits associated with its construction. In his 1890 *History of Utah* Hubert Howe Bancroft stated, “It was acknowledged by railroad men that nowhere on the line could the grading compare in completeness and finish with the work done by the people of Utah.”⁹

The Union Pacific and Central Pacific lines were officially joined in a ceremony at Promontory Summit on May

10, 1869. The driving of the Golden Spike occurred more than seven years before the original fourteen-year deadline imposed by Congress. The United States had achieved its goal of constructing a continuous railroad spanning the continent. Goods and passengers could now travel from San Francisco to New York City in only seven days’ time, including layovers—in roughly one-tenth the time and at one-tenth the cost of stage transportation. The transcontinental rails opened new land to settlement, mountains to mining, and a new age to unimagined possibilities.

The experience gained by Utahns in contracting and constructing the railroad was far more important than the promised compensation for their labor. Subsequently, the people of Utah would build a network of railroads throughout the territory, a network collectively known as the “Mormon Railroads.” Despite the fact that these local railways were eventually absorbed by larger companies, the “Mormon Railroads” were essential to Utah’s early growth and development, and they brought long-term benefits to Utah and the Church.



“IT WAS ACKNOWLEDGED
BY RAILROAD MEN THAT
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COULD THE GRADING
COMPARE IN COMPLETE-
NESS AND FINISH WITH
THE WORK DONE BY
THE PEOPLE OF UTAH.”

— Hubert Howe Bancroft,
History of Utah

UNIFIED TOGETHER—
BY SIMON WINEGAR; TRANSCON-
TINENTAL: PEOPLE, PLACE, IMPACT
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LAKE CITY, UT.



In 1883 a new company, the Denver and Rio Grande Western, began providing service in Utah from its central hub in Denver. In the short term, DRGW was enormously important in creating competition for the two transcontinental companies—the Central and Union Pacific lines—and in bringing about reduced freight rates. But it was even more important to the development of Utah’s mining and coal industries. In the long term, because it merged with or bought out many of the “Mormon Railroads” and because it provided local passenger and freight service throughout the state, the story of Utah railways is closely bound to that of Denver and Rio Grande Western.

Today there is no longer an active rail line crossing Promontory Summit. Between 1868 and 1903 the water level of the Great Salt Lake dropped by eleven feet, and in 1903 rail crews began constructing a causeway across the lake. The causeway was completed in March 1904; during World War II much of the original track across Promontory Summit was taken up and used for scrap metal. In a series of mergers Union Pacific eventually acquired Central Pacific, Denver and Rio Grande Western, and Southern Pacific Railroads.¹⁰ As one of the oldest and most richly storied corporations in the world, Union Pacific continues to play a vital role in the shipping industry, and its logo continues to remind us of the first American transcontinental rail system—and the fact that there was “nothing like it in the world.”¹¹ ▣

1 Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nothing Like It in the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad, 1863–1869* (2000), 35.

2 George Kraus, *High Road to Promontory: Building the Central Pacific Across the High Sierra* (1969), 47–8.

3 Ibid.

4 Ambrose 138.

5 John Hoyt Williams, *A Great and Shining Road: The Epic Story of the Transcontinental Railroad* (1988), 100.

6 Samuel Bowles, *Our New West: Records of Travel between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean* (1869), 56–7.

7 Ambrose 255.

8 Maury Kline, *Union Pacific* (1987), 196–7.

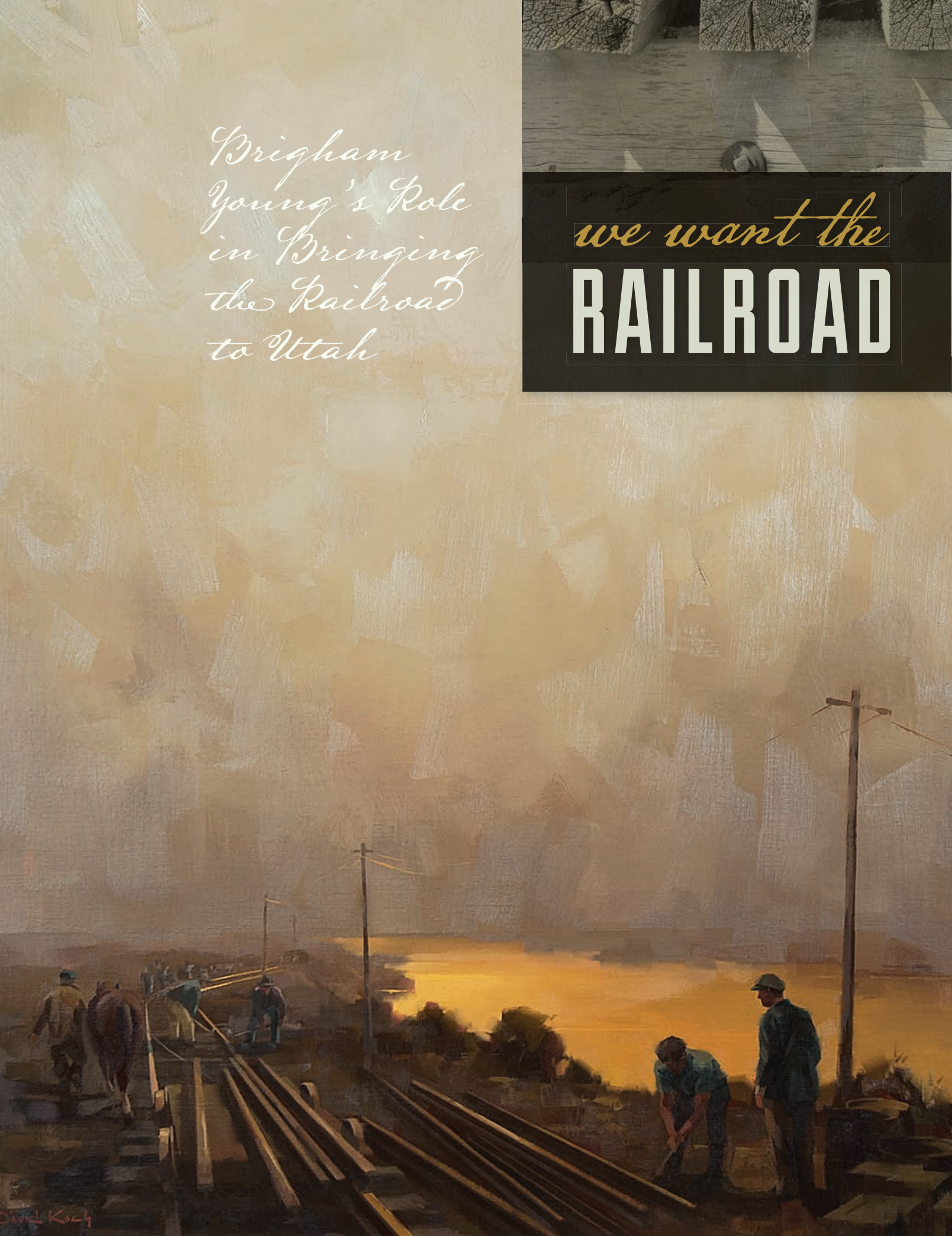
9 Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Utah* (1890), 754.

10 Central Pacific was acquired by Southern Pacific in 1885 as a leased line and in 1959 as a formal merger; Southern Pacific was purchased in 1988 by Denver and Rio Grande’s parent company, and the new company—for name recognition—was known as Southern Pacific Railroad; in 1996 Southern Pacific was acquired by Union Pacific.

11 Ambrose title page.

Brigham
Young's Role
in Bringing
the Railroad
to Utah

we want the
RAILROAD



David Koch



BY ELDER STEVEN E. SNOW, *Church Historian*

P

ick a date that most stands out in your distant memory. It might be a traumatic event. For me that would be the moment I heard President John F. Kennedy had been shot and killed in Dallas, Texas. Later it would be the deaths of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. I remember where I was, even what I was wearing. Those days are literally seared into my mind. Those dates can be happy ones, of course. The day I was married, the day US astronauts landed on the moon, the moment I heard the priesthood restriction was lifted, the days my sons were born.

If you had lived in the last half of the 1800s, one date you never would have forgotten is May 10, 1869, the day the transcontinental railroad was completed at Promontory Summit in

northern Utah. This was the date that joined America's East with the American West. It was celebrated in every city and town across the nation. For better or worse, things would never be the same.

The early travelers to the West could only dream of transcontinental railroad travel. Early leaders of the Church recall scouting for routes suitable for the construction of a railroad during the earliest days of the westward trek. Elder George A. Smith recalled:

"In April, 1847, President Young and one hundred and forty-three pioneers left Council Bluffs, and located and made the road to the site of this city. A portion of our labor was to seek out the way for a railroad across the continent, and every place we found that seemed difficult for laying the rails we searched out a way for the road to go around or through it. We had been here only a short time until we formed the provisional government of the State



THE GOLDEN ROAD—BY DAVID KOCH, *TRANSCONTINENTAL: PEOPLE, PLACE, IMPACT* EXHIBITION, RIO GALLERY, SALT LAKE CITY, UT.

of Deseret, and among the subjects of legislation were measures to promote and establish a railroad across the continent.”¹

Likewise, Brigham Young would remember:

“I do not suppose we traveled one day from the Missouri River here, but what we looked for a track where the rails could be laid with success, for a railroad through this Territory to go to the Pacific Ocean. This was long before the gold was found, when this Territory belonged to Mexico. We never went through the canyons or worked our way over the dividing ridges without asking where the rails could be laid; and I really did think that the railway would have been here long before this.”²

Clearly the early leaders of the Church saw the benefits a railroad would bring to the thousands of immigrant converts making their way west to Zion.

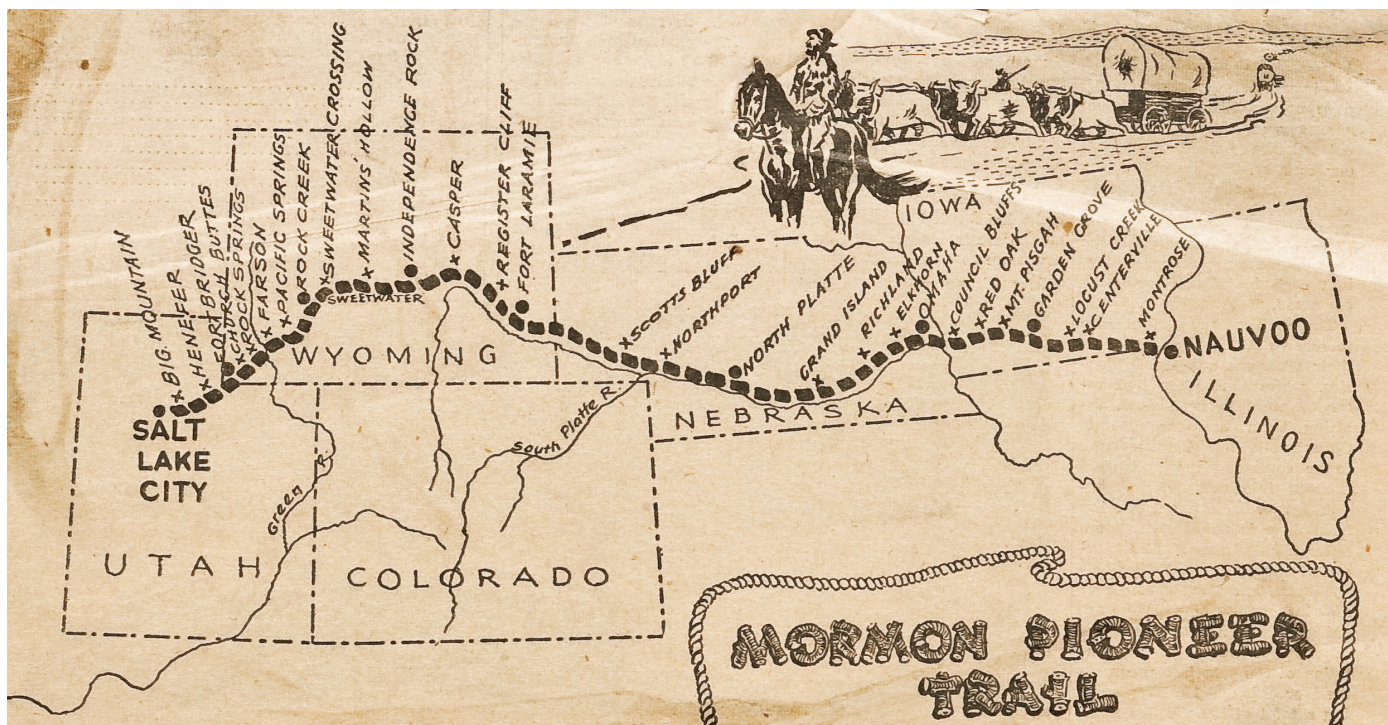
But the Utah Saints were not the only ones who longed for a transcontinental railway. In 1859 a California convention appointed Theodore Dehone Judah to carry a petition to Congress to obtain funding for a Pacific railway. In 1861, as the nation was



EARLY LEADERS OF THE CHURCH SAW THE BENEFITS A RAILROAD WOULD BRING TO THE THOUSANDS OF IMMIGRANT CONVERTS MAKING THEIR WAY WEST TO ZION.

suddenly in the midst of a great Civil War, Judah, Leland Stanford, Collis Potter Huntington, Mark Hopkins, Charles Crocker, and others organized the Central Pacific Railroad. Their purpose was to construct a railroad line from Sacramento east across the Sierra-Nevada Mountains following a route previously surveyed by Judah. Stanford was elected president; Huntington, vice-president; Hopkins, secretary; and Judah, engineer.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the continent, Union Pacific Railroad would ultimately receive the contract for the branch of the transcontinental line





LELAND STANFORD—*president of Central Pacific Railroad, beginning in 1861, and later the Southern Pacific Railroad*

heading west from Omaha, Nebraska. In 1866, Oliver Ames, a shovel manufacturer from Boston, became president of Union Pacific. His brother and partner, Oakes Ames, a US congressman, brought financial and legislative influence to the company. Thomas Durant was Union Pacific's vice-president and general manager; Grenville Dodge was the company's chief engineer.

That such a monumental construction contract would even be considered during opening months of the Civil

War seems incredible. During the darkest days of the war in 1862, Congress passed the Pacific Railway Act. The potential profits for companies who successfully won contracts were astronomical. Ultimately, Congress would award huge land grants to the railroads. The Central Pacific and the Union Pacific were awarded 12,800 acres of land for every mile of track laid. Furthermore, they were entitled to choose this acreage within twenty miles on each side of the tracks. In addition, they were paid \$16,000 for each mile of track laid on level ground, \$32,000 per mile for track laid across the high deserts of Utah and Wyoming, and \$48,000 per mile for the 150 miles of mountain construction in the Sierra-Nevada and Rocky Mountains.³

In spite of these lucrative incentives, construction did not begin until late 1863 and real progress did not occur until the close of the Civil War in 1865. The required huge sums of capital could not be raised during the War, and given that most men of working age were fighting, Union Pacific managers faced a crucial labor

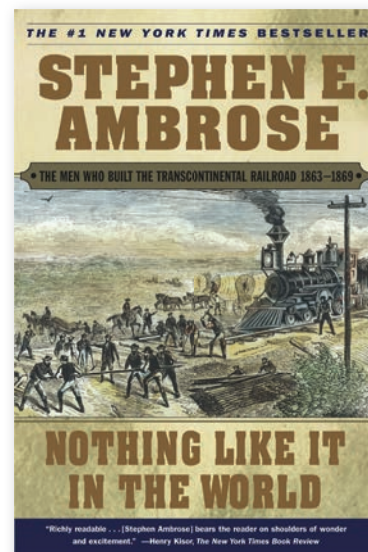
shortage until former Confederate and Union soldiers could be hired. Central Pacific solved its labor shortage by employing (and in some cases "importing") Chinese laborers, although it hired war veterans as well.⁴

The stories of this colossal construction project are, in my view, best told by Stephen Ambrose in his book *Nothing Like It In the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad*.⁵

I wish to focus on a part of the story involving Brigham Young and the Latter-day Saints of Utah. Brigham

was an early supporter of a railway that would connect the coasts of the country. Contrary to what some early historians penned, President Young had eagerly awaited the transcontinental railroad and saw its completion as a blessing—a way to accommodate the influx of converts gathering by the thousands to Zion. He was one of the first to purchase Union Pacific stock and one of the few who paid the full asking price of \$1,000 per share.⁶

Some critics confidently predicted that the Church would not be able to withstand the scrutiny of the outside world and that such scrutiny would eventually lead to the demise of the Church. Even some within the Church hierarchy worried about the influx of Gentiles and their negative effect on the thousands of Latter-day Saints who had established a theocracy in the Mountain West. To such concerns President Young boldly declared that Mormonism "must indeed be a damned poor religion if it cannot



stand one railroad!”⁷ In May 1867 while work crews were racing across the plains of Wyoming he declared, “I am anxious to see it. . . . Hurry up, hasten the work! We want to hear the iron horse puffing through this valley. What for? To bring our brethren and sisters here. . . . It opens to us the market, and we are at the door of New York, right at the threshold of the emporium of the United States. We can send our butter, eggs, cheese and fruits, and receive in return oysters, clams, cod fish, mackerel, oranges and lemons.”⁸

In spite of this confident bluster, deep down there must have been some concerns in Brigham’s mind. Being connected to the outside world via the railroad would threaten Utah’s political, religious, and economic self-reliance—its support of local manufacturing and agriculture which kept eastern commodities and fashions at bay. These concerns led to a number of measures intended to protect the territory’s Saints from being seduced by low-cost goods imported by the train. Before the coming of the railroad the Relief Society was reestablished, its having remained



MAY 21, 1868, BRIGHAM YOUNG SIGNED A CONTRACT WITH SAMUEL B. REED, UNION PACIFIC SUPERINTENDENT, FOR SOME 3,000 MEN TO BUILD BRIDGES, EXCAVATE TUNNELS, AND GRADE RAIL BEDS IN ECHO CANYON.

largely dormant since the days of Nauvoo. Brigham Young also reestablished the School of the Prophets to help adults understand the local economy as well as theology. The Young Ladies’ Department of the Ladies’ Cooperative Retrenchment Association was established in 1870 to foster home industry among the young women and to enable them to reject worldly pride and fashions. Initially organized for the daughters of Brigham Young, it later became the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association.⁹

In March 1868 the first Zion’s Cooperative Mercantile Institution (ZCMI) opened for business in Salt Lake City. Within a short time eighty such co-ops were established throughout the Utah Territory.¹⁰

So it appears that Church leaders hedged their bets when it came to the approaching railroad.

The opportunity for the cash-poor Saints to participate in the construction of the railroad was welcomed as a godsend. Union Pacific was first to contact Brigham Young for his support. On May 21, 1868, the Church leader signed a contract with Samuel B. Reed, Union Pacific superintendent, to complete road grading, tunneling, and bridging from the head of



Union Pacific Railroad construction employees, camp life scene in Uinta Mountains—probably Latter-day Saint workers. Gift of the U.P.R.R. Co., Utah Historical Society

EXCAVATION OF TUNNEL NO. 2, HEAD OF ECHO CANON—

*photo by Andrew J. Russell, ca. 1868–1869
Library of Congress*



OAKES AMES—credited by many historians as the single most important influence in the building of the Union Pacific portion of the transcontinental railroad.

Echo Canyon on the Utah-Wyoming border down into the Salt Lake Valley. Eighty percent of the contract price of \$1 million was to be paid in equal monthly payments with the balance due upon completion. George Q. Cannon, counselor to Brigham Young and the editor of the *Deseret News*, praised the contract as a “great cause for thankfulness” due to the cash-strapped economy of Utah. He later editorialized:

“Now no man need go East, or in any other direction in search of employment. There is enough for all at our very doors and in the completion of a project in which we are all interested. Coming as it does when there is such a scarcity of money and a consequent slackness of labor, it is most advantageous.

“With the cash that the Union Pacific would be paying them, the Mormons who owe may pay their debts, and have the necessary funds to send for machinery and establish mercantile houses in the various settlements.”¹¹

Soon subcontractors were hired including local Bishop John Sharp, President Daniel H. Wells of the First Presidency, and the Honorable Joseph A. Young, Brigham Young’s eldest son. While some 3,000 men were hard at work in Echo Canyon building bridges, excavating tunnels, and grading rail beds, Union Pacific management was scheming to avoid paying the Utah workers. These stall tactics obviously wreaked havoc with Utah subcontractors and their workers and with the economy generally. Many men had left family members to oversee farms and herds in hopes of earning much-needed cash, and most of these now returned to their farms and families worse off than when they had departed.¹²

Collis P. Huntington of the Central Pacific found himself on the East Coast arranging for the shipment of rolling stock, rails, and other construction materials to be sent by boat to California. While in the East he heard that the



Union Pacific had contracted with “Mormon” workers to build the line down Echo Canyon. He immediately telegraphed Leland Stanford to waste no time entering into a contract with the Saints for a similar deal. Stanford rode by rail to the end of the line in Nevada and then continued by buggy to Salt Lake City where he arranged to meet with Brigham Young.¹³

Central Pacific believed it could not afford to give Union Pacific any advantage by failing to do business with the Saints in Utah. As it turned out, Brigham was more eager than expected to strike a deal with Stanford. The Union Pacific by then was far in arrears in its payment to Utah contractors. Furthermore, to his keen disappointment and anger, President Young learned that Union Pacific did not plan on bringing the railroad through Salt Lake City



“THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY OWES THE PEOPLE OF THIS TERRITORY UPWARDS OF A MILLION OF DOLLARS FOR THE GRADING OF ITS ROADS.” —*George J. Cannon*

TRESTLE WORK, NEAR PROMONTORY SUMMIT, UTAH—photo by Andrew J. Russell, ca. 1869.
Library of Congress





100TH

MERIDIAN—

Directors of the Union Pacific Railroad meet on the 100th meridian approximately 250 miles west of Omaha, Nebraska Territory. Eastern capitalists, newspapermen, and other prominent figures were invited. Photo by John Carbutt, Oct. 1866.

but had determined to follow a northern route above the Great Salt Lake. They had justified taking this route because of better availability there of timber and water. To Brigham this could not be so. The railroad must go through the capitol of the Territory and not through some uninhabited plains to the north of the lake.

By the time he met with Young, Leland Stanford was aware that the route followed by Central Pacific would also go north of the Great Salt Lake. But he carefully avoided this detail during his negotiations with the prophet, likely obtaining better terms for the Central Pacific than otherwise would have been the case.

When the board of directors of Union Pacific learned of the Mormon contracts with Central Pacific, they panicked. It suddenly dawned on them that the work the Utah crews had completed in good faith might be turned over to the Central Pacific Railroad. They immediately signed the contract which had been in their possession for months and sent their vice-president with a partial payment and an apology. The company's representative begged President Young to rescind the contract with the Central Pacific. Predictably, Young refused.¹⁴

From September 1868 to April 1869, when Promontory Summit was agreed upon as the point of junction of the two great railroads, Latter-day Saint construction crews completed miles and miles of parallel roads as the railroad companies

sought to win the lucrative payments of money and land. The companies did not lay track beyond the agreed junction, but cuts and fills are still in evidence today where the construction crews of the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific worked side by side.¹⁵

What had initially been viewed by leaders of the Church as a windfall for the cash-strapped Utah Territory did not in fact turn out as well as they had hoped. Clearly the Utah construction crews did excellent work. They built bridges and tunnels through rugged Echo Canyon. They blasted, cut, and filled through the mountains and the northern plains of Utah. The quality of their work was seldom in question. But by the time Utah construction crews came on the scene, both railroad companies were cash-poor and exhausted. Many contractors, not just the Utah crews, remained unpaid for their back-breaking labor—yet the companies did all they could to press the construction forward. If that meant bankrupting small contractors, so be it.

On May 10, 1869, the work was completed. A ceremony was to take place at Promontory to commemorate the joining of the rails and the commencement of transcontinental railroad travel. Brigham Young was noticeably absent from the ceremony, likely still fuming that the railroad had bypassed Salt Lake City but even more angry because contracts entered into with both railroad companies remained unpaid. Other Church officials as well as territorial representatives attended the ceremony. There are conflicting reports as to what actually occurred due in no small part to the abundance of liquor on site. Finally, a last message went out over the wires, "Done!" The East and the West had been joined.¹⁶

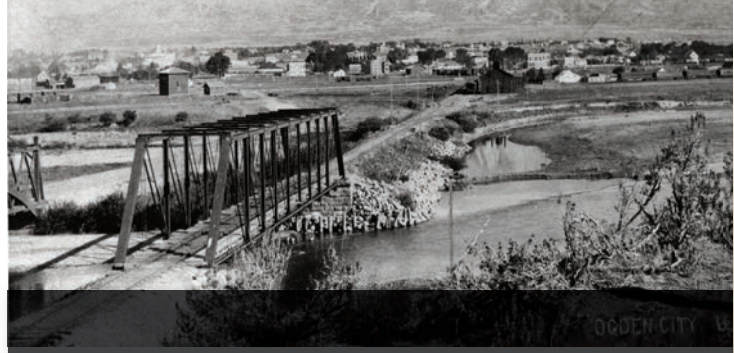
At the time the railroad was completed in May 1869 it is estimated Union Pacific Railroad owed Utah contractors over \$1.2 million; Central Pacific Railroad owed approximately \$1 million. Central Pacific agreed to pay all but \$200,000 by September of that year. No such concession was made by Union

Pacific, and financial panic descended on the Territory. Laborers were destitute, and contractors had no funds to pay them or their suppliers and other creditors. Today, a federal lawsuit would be filed, but in 1869 the legal system was not well-defined in the West. Besides, the Utah contractors were desperate and could not afford to wait for legal cases to wend their way through the courts.

Instead, they resorted to negotiation, and even to begging, in vain attempts to receive satisfaction from Union Pacific. On September 1, 1869, the *Deseret News* ran this editorial penned by George Q. Cannon:

“Perhaps on no one point for many years have the people of Utah exhibited more of their characteristic patience and forbearance than in the case of the railroad contracts for grading which they have filled for the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroad Companies. Upward of fifteen months ago a contract was made by the Union Pacific Railroad Company, through its Superintendent of Construction and Engineer, S. B. Reed, Esq., with President B. Young for the grading of a large extent of its Line. ...

“The non-fulfillment of this agreement on the



THE CHURCH FORMED THE UTAH CENTRAL RAILROAD TO BUILD A THIRTY-SEVEN MILE SPUR FROM SALT LAKE CITY TO OGDEN, UTAH. THE LAST SPIKE WAS DRIVEN ON JANUARY 10, 1870.

part of the Company was a most serious loss to the contractor and his subcontractors. ...

“The people of this Territory may well be proud of their share of the grading of the great continental highway; for their work will bear the closest scrutiny, and their patience, perseverance, sobriety, language and general demeanor while on the Line were such as to extort praise from all who were brought in contact with them. ... The Union Pacific Railroad Company owes the people of this Territory upwards of a million of dollars for the grading of its roads. ...

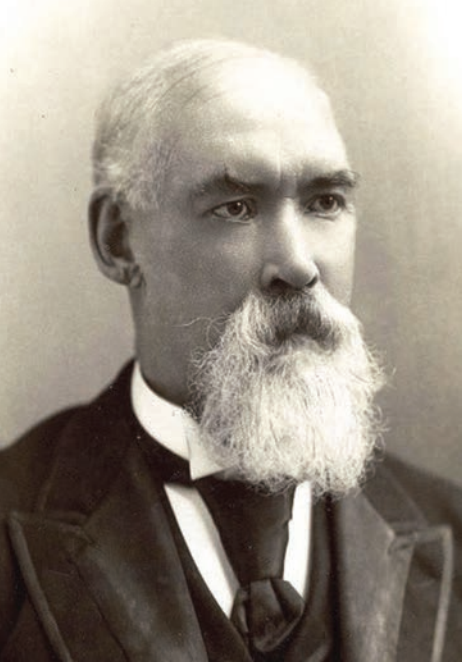
“... A moment's reflection will convince every person that the withholding of a million and a quarter of dollars from a community no larger than ours must produce serious loss, embarrassment and distress. Had there been no hopes of pay held out, the consequences would not have been as serious as they are, for every man would then have known what to depend upon and would have arranged accordingly. But, as it is, there is not a business man in the country who is not affected, and some very seriously, by the failure of these companies to pay for their work, and hundreds of men



CROWD GATHERED AT PROMONTORY, UTAH, MAY 10, 1869—
Utah State Historical Society

UTAH CENTRAL RAILROAD, CA 1870—

*photo by C. W. Carter,
Utah State Historical Society*



JOHN SHARP

— was a subcontractor for the construction of the transcontinental railroad in Utah, and represented Brigham Young and the Church of Jesus Christ at the driving of the final spike on May 10, 1869, at Promontory Summit, Utah.

are literally destitute of the necessities of life for the want of the money which they worked hard to earn.

... Its injustice is so apparent that it needs no comment."¹⁷

While this financial hardship was gripping the Territory, the Church formed the Utah Central Railroad to build a thirty-seven-mile spur from Salt Lake City to Ogden, Utah, the ultimate agreed-on junction of the two railroads. Stocks and bonds were issued to raise funds for equipment and supplies. The labor was furnished for free by the various quorums and wards in Northern Utah. The work was managed by bishops along the route; each was responsible for obtaining rights-of-way, providing timber for ties and trestles, and arranging grading for sections of the rail line within his jurisdiction. The

construction progressed rapidly, and the last spike linking Salt Lake with Ogden was driven on January 10, 1870. A large crowd of 15,000 was on hand in Salt Lake City to witness the ceremony. Ironically, the size of the crowd was more than three times the number present at Promontory eight months earlier.¹⁸

This spur would be the beginning of a network of railways that quickly spread throughout Utah. An early advantage of the railway was to accelerate the transportation of blocks of granite for the construction of the Salt Lake Temple from the quarry in Little Cottonwood Canyon to Temple Square.

The unpaid laborers and subcontractors on the Union Pacific and Central Pacific contracts were paid in a variety of imaginative ways: they received usable credit for paying tithing; they were issued stocks and bonds in the Utah Central



Railroad; they were given cash and produce from the sale of stocks and bonds.

During subsequent months—and years—Union Pacific made partial payment on its debt through the transfer of rolling stock and rails that financed the construction of the Utah Central Railway. Still, many of the Latter-day Saint contractors would pay heavily for their involvement in transcontinental rail construction through Utah. Elder Ezra Taft Benson of Logan died of a massive heart attack in September 1869. He was in Ogden trying to collect what Union Pacific owed him so he could pay his workmen. He was only 58 years old, and extreme anxiety is said to have brought on the attack. Bishop Chauncey West of Ogden, another contractor, died two months later at the age of 42. His death was also attributed to extreme anxiety over his inability to pay the wages of his workmen. Joseph A. Young, a son of Brigham and another contractor, died at age 40.¹⁹

In spite of financial hardships, anxiety, and even death, great advantages were bestowed on the people of Utah and on the Church through the building of the transcontinental railroad. First and perhaps foremost, the three-month journey by wagon from Council Bluffs to the Salt Lake Valley could now be made in the course of a few days. The entire country could be traversed in less than two weeks. This was of great benefit to immigrants coming to Utah and to missionaries traveling from Utah to domestic and foreign mission fields. The railroad tied together the communities of Utah, providing greater cohesion among Saints and Gentiles alike. Rail systems would be a great boon to the emerging mining industry as ore could be carried more quickly and cost effectively to smelters. Finally, the railroad significantly raised living standards among the people of Utah. Goods and produce could be shipped and sold in larger markets for cash. Furniture, machinery, and other goods and commodities could be imported from the East to what had once been a remote and backwater territory. The great benefits of the transcontinental railroad to the people



IN SPITE OF FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS, ANXIETY, AND EVEN DEATH, GREAT ADVANTAGES WERE BESTOWED ON THE PEOPLE OF UTAH AND ON THE CHURCH THROUGH THE BUILDING OF THE TRANS-CONTINENTAL RAILROAD.

of Utah—and to the entire country—cannot be overstated.

Certainly, if you had been alive during the last half of the nineteenth century, you would have always remembered the date of May 10, 1869. ▣

1 John J. Stewart, "The Railroad Builder," Susan Easton Black and Larry C. Porter, eds., *Lion of the Lord: Essays on the Life and Service of Brigham Young* (1995), 263–4.

2 Stewart 264.

3 Stewart 267.

4 Ibid.

5 Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nothing Like It in the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad, 1863–1869* (2000).

6 Stewart 268.

7 Stewart 265.

8 "Remarks," *Deseret News*, 7 Aug 1867, 250–1.

9 William W. Slaughter, "Celebrating the Transcontinental Railroad," *Pioneer* (Spring 2002): 8; Jill Mulvey Derr, Carol Cornwall Madsen, Kate Holbrook, and Matthew J. Grow, eds., *The First Fifty Years of Relief Society: Key Documents in Latter-day Saint Women's History* (2016), 353–7.

10 Slaughter 8.

11 Stewart 269.

12 Stewart 271.

13 Stewart 274.

14 Stewart 274–5.

15 Stewart 276.

16 Slaughter 5.

17 Stewart 282–3.

18 Stewart 284.

19 Stewart 283.

Deseret VIEWS



“The Central Pacific Railroad (CPRR) hired Chinese laborers to build the western part of the Transcontinental Railroad. Even though racist attitudes and poor conditions prevailed, these workers proved themselves invaluable for the completion of this awesome task. They brought a strong work ethic, customs, and healthier foods. Work crews had a headman who collected wages and paid costs (food, clothing, etc), a cook, tea carrier, dried sea foods, bamboo shoots, rice, spices, etc. A box car labeled ‘China Store’ carried specialty items. Historians mention that they used barrels of warm water to take sponge baths at the end of the work day.”

—Ken Baxter

CPRR CHINESE ENCAMPMENT—BY KEN BAXTER, *TRANSCONTINENTAL: PEOPLE, PLACE, IMPACT* EXHIBITION, RIO GALLERY, SALT LAKE CITY, UT.



SPANNING *Nation*



BRIGHAM YOUNG AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD.

BY THOMAS G. ALEXANDER

Soon after the first Latter-day Saint settlers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, leaders of the Church recognized how beneficial a transcontinental railroad would be to the new settlement. A railroad connecting the Pacific Coast to the eastern United States would enable immigrating Saints to travel to the Valley faster and more economically and safely than by using traditional overland travel methods. Manufactured goods, livestock feed, and produce might also be obtained more quickly and efficiently should natural disasters such as drought, floods, and insect plagues lead to crop failures.

Latter-day Saints were not the first to call for an ocean-to-ocean railroad. Early in the century American politicians and businessmen had discussed the possibility of such a railway, and by the late 1840s the legislatures of sixteen states had passed resolutions calling for the construction of a railroad to the Pacific.¹

In 1852 the Utah territorial legislature sent a memorandum to Congress petitioning for an Atlantic-Pacific railroad, and subsequent sessions repeated the plea.² Brigham Young, at the time both governor of the territory and Church president, believed the railroad would expand commerce nationwide. In January 1856 he suggested, “If I was the government of the U.S., I would [open traffic] from London to China in 75 days and back again.” If the government did not construct such a railroad, he said, the Latter-day Saints should do so.³

To build a transcontinental railroad required crossing seemingly endless plains, raging rivers, blazing deserts and rugged mountains.

Before construction, engineers had to explore and map potential routes. In the mid-1850s US Secretary of War Jefferson Davis sent out a series of exploring parties to survey lands and study the general feasibility of various routes. US Army Lt. John W. Gunnison and his party were killed by Pahvant Utes while exploring one such route through Central Utah.⁴ In 1861 railroad promoter Theodore D. Judah, the chief engineer for the Sacramento Valley Railroad, surveyed a route through the Sierra Nevada mountains. Judah gained the support of four prominent California businessmen who eventually founded the Central Pacific Railroad.

Building on these surveys, and in view of intensifying national interest, Congress passed the Pacific Railway Act that President Abraham Lincoln signed on July 1, 1862. The law granted the Union Pacific the right to lay rails from the hundredth meridian (though the railroad began at Omaha, Nebraska), and commissioned the Central Pacific to build eastward from San Francisco or from the end of the navigable waters of the Sacramento River.⁵ As an incentive, the Pacific Railroad Act granted each

company the odd-numbered sections of public land for ten miles on both sides of their track lines. The Act allowed these land sections to be sold to defray construction costs, but most of the land had little real value until after the railroad was completed. The Act also granted the railroads a 400-foot right-of-way along the track. Most enticing was the government's loaning the railroads 6% government bonds with a 30-year maturity that they could sell to help finance construction.⁶ The railroads received the government bonds at intervals, depending on the configuration of the land and the sections of track completed.

Brigham Young demonstrated his support for the Pacific railroad by buying five shares of Union Pacific stock for \$5,000. He was apparently the only investor who paid the full asking price.⁷ Investors could buy stock on installment plans, initially paying as little as \$100 per share for Union Pacific stock and \$10 per share for Central Pacific. In order to attract investors, railroad officials offered shares at very low prices to particularly influential individuals, especially Congressmen who supported the railroad companies.

GENERAL JOHN S. CASEMENT, "JACK"—supervising construction of the Union Pacific Railroad. Most of his railroad workers were Irish immigrants. PHOTO BY ANDREW J. RUSSELL.



Congress of the United States

At the Second Session

BEGUN AND HELD AT THE CITY OF WASHINGTON

in the District of Columbia

on Monday the second day of December one thousand eight hundred and sixty one

AN ACT To aid in the construction of a railroad and telegraph line, from the Missouri river to the Pacific ocean, and to secure to the government the use of the same for postal, military, and other purposes:

Be It Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

That Luther L. Burgess, William F. Blodget, Benjamin H. Chace, Charles Fredrick Hatcher, of Rhode Island; Augustus Brewster, Henry P. Hare, Cornelius A. Bushnell, Henry Hammond, of Connecticut; Isaac Hornum, Dean Richmond, Royal Phelps, William H. Ferry, Henry A. Peabody, Lewis A.

PACIFIC RAILWAY ACT
SIGNED BY PRESIDENT
ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
JULY 1, 1862.

Approved, July 1, 1862

aidance, so far as the same can be ascertained;
s, and all other officers of the Company;
to amount thereof actually paid in;
times thereof paid upon for the construction of the road, and
the road;
thereon;
and its fixtures;
setting forth the various kinds thereof, which shall be sworn
the Secretary of the Treasury on or before the first day of July in each year.

Salustius Brown
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Solomon Foot,
President of the Senate pro tempore
Abraham Lincoln

The two railroads had very disparate leadership. Dr. Thomas C. Durant, an ophthalmologist turned merchant and promoter, was the driving force behind the Union Pacific. He served as vice-president and general manager of the company for most of its early years. Durant hired Brig. Gen. Grenville M. Dodge as chief engineer and Silas M. Seymour as a consulting engineer.⁸ These men often overrode the construction superintendent, engineer Samuel B. Reed, on matters of route selection.⁹

Durant sent out four engineers to reconnoiter various routes. Searching for a route into the Salt Lake Valley, Reed traveled to Salt Lake City where he met with Brigham Young. Anxious to have the railroad reach Utah, Young outfitted Reed with fifteen men and three wagons, as well as equipment, provisions, and a letter instructing Latter-day Saints to give the engineer whatever assistance he needed. Reed's explorations led him to recommend several routes. One descended from the Bear River crossing in Wyoming into Utah's Echo Canyon, continuing down Weber Canyon into the Salt Lake Valley.¹⁰

Another went west from Weber Canyon on the north side of the Great Salt Lake. Yet another continued west "by the south end of the Lake," and as late as September 12, 1868, a UP survey party was still assessing this route.

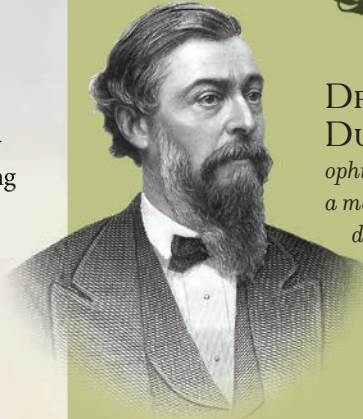
Already, however, the Central Pacific had "decided upon the route by the northern end of the Lake."¹¹ Although Brigham Young wanted the railroad to enter the Wasatch Front at Salt Lake City, he had reconciled himself to whatever choice the railroads made: "Whether it comes through this city or not it is all right, because God rules and He will have things as He pleases."¹²

In contrast to Union Pacific's central management under Durant, Central Pacific was managed by five Sacramento businessmen: Collis P. Huntington, Leland Stanford, Mark Hopkins, and Charles and Edwin B. Crocker.¹³ The two companies could also not have had more contrasting crews of graders and tracklayers. Union Pacific's construction chiefs were the Casement brothers, Jack and Dan. Jack Casement spent most of his time at construction sites, and most of his workers were Irish immigrants.¹⁴ Central Pacific

construction superintendent James H. Strobridge hired as many as 12,000 Chinese from China's Guangdong Province, in part because of their availability and strong work ethic, and in part because he could pay them less than white workers.¹⁵

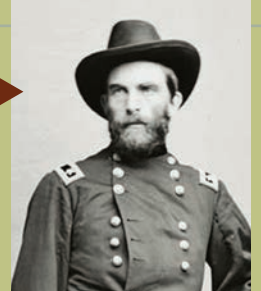
As Jack Casement's Irish crews pushed from Nebraska into Colorado and Wyoming territories, temporary tent-and-timber cities sprang up on the route. Called "Hell-on-Wheels" towns by Massachusetts newspaper editor Samuel Bowles, these traveling boom towns arose first at North Platte, Nebraska, where it was "easier to find a drink of whiskey than a drink of water."¹⁶ Consisting mainly of saloons, gambling tents, and brothels, the Hell-on-Wheels towns were fertile ground for robbers, pickpockets, and swindlers who would resort to murder if necessary. Some Hell-on-Wheels towns were like Julesburg, Colorado, which already existed before the railroad came through. Others, like Cheyenne and Rawlins, Wyoming, morphed into permanent cities. Still others, like Bear River City, Wyoming, about ten miles southeast of present-day Evanston, sprang up near the

By July 1867, the "Tent City" of Cheyenne was laid out and planned by Union Pacific Railroad. When the construction train arrived in November, there were already 3000 residents. SEE "HELL ON WHEELS SEASON 4: TRUTH OR FICTION?" WYOMING STATE ARCHIVES, ONLINE.



DR. THOMAS C. DURANT—Formerly an ophthalmologist, Durant became a merchant, promoter, and the driving force behind the Union Pacific. He served as vice-president and general manager of the company for most of its early years.

BRIG. GEN. GRENVILLE M. DODGE—chief engineer



Group of engineers for the Union Pacific Railroad at Echo, Utah. UTAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.



railhead and then dried up after construction crews had moved on—or moved along with them.

Church leaders and Utah businessmen expected the railroad would benefit the territory in many ways. Rail travel would be faster, more economical, and more convenient for immigrants coming to the Salt Lake Valley, and freight shipments would enjoy similar advantages. Brigham Young and the first company of pioneers to reach the Great Basin from Winter Quarters arrived in 1847 after a journey of more than three months. After the completion of the railroad in 1869, with average train speeds of twenty to thirty-five miles per hour, Latter-day Saint immigrants could travel from Council Bluffs to Salt Lake City by rail in only three to five days.¹⁷

In addition to more efficient travel, Church leaders believed that Latter-day Saint construction of the roadbeds, bridges, and tunnels would bring economic benefits.

By contracting to grade the roadways, Latter-day Saint businessmen

could earn profits from the rail companies and provide employment for local laborers at a time when members suffered from insect plagues and scarce food.¹⁸ In addition, Brigham Young believed that if he hired Latter-day Saint laborers to do the grading, typical Hell-on-Wheels towns would not become serious problems within the territory.¹⁹

Brigham Young also noted that the railroads offered free passage from Omaha for able-bodied men “with their family and friends” who could promptly begin “the work required.” This benefit was tailor-made for the many immigrants still arriving from Europe. Young and other leaders viewed taking contracts for railroad construction “as a Godsend”: given the hardships the Saints had endured, there was “much indebtedness among the people.” Young declared that “the contract affords the opportunity for turning . . . labor into money.”²⁰ Moreover, Young continued, the railroad would enable the Saints to “import needed machinery, and such useful articles as we cannot yet produce, and . . . gather around [the people] . . . the comforts of life in their new homes.”²¹

George Q. Cannon agreed, noting also that “as soon as the Railroad is completed, timber, iron and every other article necessary for the manufacture



JACK CASEMENT—



DAN CASEMENT—
Union Pacific's construction chiefs. IMAGES FROM
WYOMING PUBLIC MEDIA,
ONLINE.



of carriages, wagons, sleighs, furniture, agricultural implements and a great variety of other necessary articles can be easily imported.” He hoped that Utahns would be able to compete “successfully . . . with the manufacturers of similar articles in the East.”²² Cannon also suggested that Utahns could grow fruit and other crops to sell not only in Utah but elsewhere.²³

Recognizing these advantages, Brigham Young wanted to contract with Union Pacific to grade the roadbed through Utah and beyond.²⁴ In July 1867, Brigham Young Jr. had laid the groundwork for eventual contracts through meetings with a number of Union Pacific officials while traveling from Chicago to Omaha.²⁵ Ten months later, Thomas Durant telegraphed Brigham Young inviting him to sign a contract to grade the railroad bed from the head of Echo Canyon toward Salt Lake.²⁶

Responding to this invitation, on May 21, 1868, Young contracted with UP construction superintendent Samuel Reed “to do all the grading and Masonry on that part of the Union Pacific Rail Road between . . . the head of Echo Cañon and the Salt Lake Valley at or near the Mouth of the cañon in the valley of the Weber river.” In addition, Young had the option “to do the grading from the mouth of Weber Cañon to Salt Lake City or, in case the line is located around the north end of Salt Lake, then to the Lake, if desired.” Young agreed to complete the grading work by November 1, 1868, unless the

track could not be laid by then. In that event, he was to have “more time to complete the work, providing it is finished in time not to delay the track laying.”

To facilitate Young’s grading work, UP agreed to “transport from Omaha to the western terminus of the road, free [of charge], men, teams, and tools for the work,” and to bill transportation costs for powder, fuses and heavy equipment at the same rate “charged to other contractors.” The memorandum specified the amounts the company would pay for various types of work. Eighty percent of the monthly estimate was to be “paid about the twentieth of each month,” and the remainder “shall be paid . . . within thirty days after the completion of the work according to this agreement.”²⁷

After signing the UP contract, Brigham Young sent out word that he was hiring men to begin grading. Bishop John Sharp of the Salt Lake Twentieth Ward, an active entrepreneur and one of Young’s close business associates, began the first grading at a site selected by Reed at Devil’s Gate in Weber Canyon. At 10:30am on Tuesday, June 9, 1868, Reed symbolically broke ground, and Sharp’s crews began constructing the foundation for a stone causeway in the Weber Riv-

JAMES H. STROBRIDGE—

Central Pacific construction superintendent, hired as many as 12,000 Chinese from China’s Guangdong Province.





THEODORE DEHONE

JUDAH—central figure in the original promotion, establishment, and design of the first transcontinental railroad. Judah was the chief engineer of the Central Pacific Railroad (CPRR), and determined the best route for the railroad over the Sierra Nevada mountains.

T. D. Judah

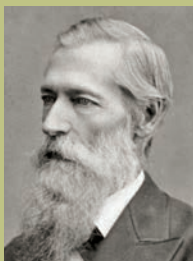


LELAND STANFORD



COLLIS P. HUNTINGTON

Four Sacramento merchants, known as the "Big Four," managed financing and construction of the CPRR.



MARK HOPKINS JR.



CHARLES C. CROCKER



er.²⁸ Later in June, Sharp's workmen began to dig an 800-foot cut near Devils Gate.²⁹ Establishing a partnership with Sharp, Brigham's son, Joseph A. Young, delivered lumber to the work site to construct housing for the graders—and this was the beginning of Sharp & Young.³⁰

During the early stages of grading, engineers for the UP were tardy in surveying the line, and they held up Latter-day Saints' progress. By July 3, engineers had only surveyed slightly "over half of the distance from the head of Echo to the mouth of Weber." On July 11, Brigham Young pointed out that although his graders were making good progress, "the engineers were not staking off the road fast enough."³¹ By July 16, surveyors had still failed to survey large sections of the line.³²

In addition to problems with slow surveys, the Sharp & Young crews found themselves confronted by steep cliffs, narrow passages, and a swiftly flowing river as they cut, filled, dug tunnels, and built bridges and causeways in Weber Canyon.³³ Perhaps the hardest section on the entire line was the stretch of narrow canyon from about six miles east of Morgan to the mouth of Lost Creek near present-day Croyden. Crews had to blast two tunnels, one about 500 feet long and the other about 300 feet, in addition to digging a cut seventy feet deep.³⁴ By September 5, while still hard at work on the two tunnels near Lost Creek, Sharp & Young crews further down the canyon were progressing well, leading the contractors to believe they would finish the grading on time.³⁵ By January 27 or 28, 1869, crews had blasted through the smaller of the two tunnels in Weber Canyon, and most of the grading above Devil's Gate had been completed.³⁶ However, they had not completed the larger tunnel.

Some of Brigham Young's subcontractors did not have as many obstacles as Sharp & Young encountered. In late July 1868, Col. Thomas E. Ricks with fifty men from Logan joined with James Livingston of the Salt Lake Twentieth Ward in grading a short segment of about a mile.³⁷ Elder John Taylor of the Twelve also had a relatively easy contract near Mountain Green.³⁸ By September 26, 1868, Taylor's crew had nearly finished its grading assignment, and

Taylor set up a steam-driven sawmill from which he furnished the UP with a million feet of lumber—presumably for ties and trestles.³⁹

By mid-September 1868 George Q. Cannon of the *Deseret News* reported that work on the Weber Canyon grade was nearing completion, but Cannon urged those finished with harvesting crops to assist where needed in promptly finishing the roadbed.⁴⁰ By November 18, 1868, some of Young's subcontractors had begun grading the Union Pacific line "from Weber Cañon to the Lake."⁴¹

Grading in Echo Canyon began concurrently with work in the Weber. As Sharp and his crews had begun working at Devil's Gate, Bishop John Proctor put together a month's provisions and traveled with thirty men of the Salt Lake Tenth Ward to begin grading in Echo Canyon.⁴² By June 18, subcontractors had established twelve camps for the workmen in the canyon.⁴³ About June 28, President Abraham O. Smoot of the Utah Stake and his counselor, Elijah F. Sheets, arrived with a crew of seventy additional men from Pro-

vo.⁴⁴ While John W. Young delivered needed "scrapers and plows" in early July, a shortage of wheelbarrows hampered the workmen, and the *Deseret News* urged anyone who could construct wheelbarrows at "reasonable rates" to do so as soon as possible.⁴⁵

By July 13, crews of men representing virtually every city and town throughout central and northern Utah and nearly every walk of life from "ministers of the gospel" to "the dusky collier" had taken up "spades, wheelbarrows, and picks," to grade the Echo Canyon roadbed.⁴⁶ Near the head of the canyon, a crew led by E. R. Young had "made dams, dug ditches, and turned the creek into a new channel" to accommodate the railroad right-of-way.⁴⁷ High up in the canyon crews had to blast out a "heavy cut and a 500-foot tunnel"; the tunnel was one of three in the canyon.⁴⁸ By July 16, some of the subcontractors had finished their sections while others, like Elijah Sheets, took their crews to the head of the canyon to assist with the John W. Young contract.⁴⁹

Wagon train loaded with construction supplies moving down Echo Canyon, Utah. PHOTO BY ANDREW J. RUSSELL, UTAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.





DEEP CUT, NO. 1. WEST OF WILHELMINA PASS, WEBER CANYON—PHOTO BY ANDREW J. RUSSELL, CA. 1868–69. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The work in Echo Canyon was so difficult that crews had to terrace deep cuts to prevent soil from sliding onto the roadbed.⁵⁰ By August 2, crews had completed “more than two-thirds” of the grading in Echo Canyon, and many of them had moved to Weber Canyon where even more work remained.⁵¹ Since work on the three Echo Canyon tunnels required considerable time, crews laid a “temporary track” so trains could proceed westward while they finished tunneling.⁵²

By December 19 workers remaining in Echo Canyon were focused on blasting a 500-foot cut at the mouth of the narrowest section of the canyon, a cut that was 73 feet wide at the base and 90 feet wide at the top. Other workmen were trying to complete the blasting of the three tunnels, and still others were working on rock cuts at the tunnel entrances.

In early January 1869, Sharp & Young crews were still struggling to blast through the longer tunnel in Weber Canyon, so Durant removed them and put UP crews to work on it.⁵³ By late January, however, UP Superintendent Reed saw that the Irish working on the tunnel were making



THOUSAND MILE TREE—at *Wilhelmina's Pass, Weber Canyon, exactly 1000 miles from Omaha, Nebraska.* PHOTO BY ANDREW J. RUSSELL, CA. 1869. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

little progress even though more were employed than had been under Sharp & Young. Reed asked the Sharp & Young crew to resume work on the tunnel, which they did—using powerful but unstable nitroglycerin instead of black powder for blasting.⁵⁴ Reed offered the crew a hundred-dollar prize if they could complete the tunnel by January 30, which they did. The workmen agreed to donate the prize to one of their number who had been injured, “but who is now recovered.”⁵⁵

While Sharp & Young grading crews now moved ahead unhampered to construct the UP roadbed, Central Pacific's Chinese crews had traversed the Sierra and were grading and laying rails across the Humboldt River route in Nevada. In order to compete with the UP, CP's leadership decided in mid-1868 they needed additional workers to grade eastward toward the UP line.⁵⁶ The junction point had not yet been established, and the railroads received land and bonds for track they laid prior to the joining of the rails.

Seeing the UP's use of Brigham Young's local workers as an advantage, Leland Stanford met with Young in August 1868 and asked him to

take the contract for grading the Central Pacific roadbed in eastern Nevada and western Utah. Although Young wanted to accept the contract, he finally told Stanford he could not as his crews were spread thin and as he did not want to risk losing favor with UP officials. Nevertheless, Young arranged to have Stanford make a contract with Ezra Taft Benson of the Twelve, Ogden mayor and stake president Lorin Farr, and Ogden Third Ward bishop Chauncey W. West. With the approval of CP partners, Stanford designated Chauncey West to assume “entire charge of activities at the front, while the other two Latter-day Saint contractors were to see that he was supplied with men, teams, tools and provisions.”⁵⁷ West and his partners agreed to grade west from Monument Point (north of the Great Salt Lake) to Humboldt Wells (now simply Wells), Nevada, for about \$4 million. Stanford also told them if their work suited the CP, they would be given the contract to grade as far east as Weber Canyon. Stanford actually hoped to push the CP east at least to the junction of Weber and Echo Canyons, perhaps farther. By the last week of August, West had put eighty teams and mule-powered scrapers to work on the Monument Point-Humboldt Wells contract.⁵⁸ In addition, Stanford gave a contract to West and his partners to grade from Ogden “some sixty miles . . . to Monument Point,” and link up with the eastbound roadbed coming from Humboldt Wells.⁵⁹ By November 18, 1868, one of West’s crews was already grading a 27-mile stretch from “Willard City north-west around the edge of the Lake to Promontory Mountain.” West also expected to begin work “in the vicinity of Ogden” during the



END OF TRACK, ON HUMBOLDT PLAINS, NEVADA—PHOTO BY ALFRED A. HART.
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



MORMON WORKERS’ ENCAMPMENT AT THE HEAD OF ECHO CANYON—
PHOTO BY ANDREW J. RUSSELL, CA. 1868–1869
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

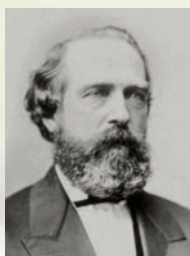
EZRA TAFT
BENSON—of the
Quorum of the Twelve



LORIN FARR—
Ogden mayor,
stake president

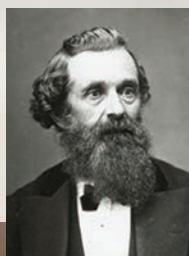


CHAUNCEY
W. WEST—Ogden
Third Ward bishop



week.⁶⁰ In December 1868, Lorenzo Snow of the Twelve accepted a subcontract from West to begin laying roadbed from the Box Elder County line to Promontory using a crew of “a large proportion of the male inhabitants” of Brigham City.⁶¹

The Latter-day Saint graders worked from sunup to sundown, and their nightlife in the grading camps contrasted favorably with that in the typical camps. Many of the workmen brought their wives and children to live with them in temporary housing. Some of the wives assisted with cooking, cleaning, and mending while others cared for the children. After the graders returned from work and ate dinner, they frequently sang songs together, and then the “hard-handed blasters and graders knelt down and offered up prayer and praise and thanksgiving to the Father of all mercies.”⁶² Such activities were undoubtedly a strange sight to the veteran section hands who observed them.



LORENZO
SNOW—of the
Quorum of the Twelve

As railroad construction proceeded, Utah tradesmen and business owners began making plans to compete with the less-expensive manufactured goods that rail transportation would bring to the territory. As early as July 20, 1868, as the UP tracks moved westward, trains began to deliver Utah-bound freight to the constantly progressing railhead.⁶³ Local businesses would collect the goods at the railhead and deliver them by wagon.

Brigham Young and others organized Zion’s Cooperative Mercantile Institution (ZCMI) as a cooperative manufacturer and retailer. They expected to manufacture such goods as wagons, sleighs, clothing, and shoes and then sell them at lower prices than imported goods—products manufactured outside of the territory—would cost. The cooperative was intended to benefit both producers and consumers.

Another strategy began on November 16, 1868, when Jesse C. Little traveled east on behalf of the Utah Manufacturing Company to “purchase such material and machinery as they may need to successfully prosecute their manufacturing wagons, carriages and agricultural machinery of much superior



quality and at cheaper rates than we can now import from the States.”⁶⁴

Another important development resulting from the impending arrival of the railroad was the opening of a government land office in Utah. The railroad companies realized they could not obtain titles to their federal land grants without a land office, and in June 1868 Congress was finally moved to extend the land laws to Utah, to reopen Utah’s surveying district, and to establish a land office in Utah.⁶⁵ By late September the law had passed and the Surveyor General began to collect Utah surveying records.⁶⁶ The *Deseret News* published instructions for Utahns on how to file for property under the recently passed legislation.⁶⁷

Since the railroads would not pass through Salt Lake City, Brigham Young and his associates decided to construct the Utah Central Railroad from Ogden to Utah’s capital city. By December 27, 1868, “engineering parties of both the Union and

Central companies,” were “running surveys for branch lines from Ogden to Salt Lake City.”⁶⁸ By January 5, the two surveys were “nearly run.”⁶⁹ On March 3, 1869, Young and his associates organized the Utah Central Railroad in Salt Lake City. They offered shares for sale, and investors purchased ten percent as required by law to organize the railroad.⁷⁰ At a meeting of March 8, those present elected Brigham Young president, William Jennings vice-president, Joseph A. Young general superintendent, John W. Young secretary, and Jesse W. Fox as chief engineer. Fox and John Young proceeded to lay out a route for the railroad.⁷¹

As Young was helping initiate work on Utah Central in late 1868, he was also taking measures to prevent the railroads from building their junction depots in Box Elder County’s Corinne which had emerged as another Hell-on-Wheels town. On December 31, in company with his counselor, George A. Smith, and business associate, Horace S. Eldredge, Brigham Young traveled to Ogden. There he met with



EARLY LOCOMOTIVE AT OGDEN—
PHOTO BY ALFRED A. HART, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Union Pacific Railroad Co.
Offer a limited amount of their
FIRST MORTGAGE BONDS,
Having thirty years to run, and bearing annual interest, payable on the first days of January and July in the city of New York, at the rate of
SIX PER CENT. IN GOLD,
AT
NINETY CENTS ON THE DOLLAR.
At the current rate of premium on Gold, these Bonds pay an annual interest on their present cost of
NINE PER CENT.,
And it is believed that on the completion of the road, like the Government Bonds, they will go above par. The Company intend to sell but a limited amount at the present low rate, and retain the right to advance the price at their own option.
Subscriptions will be received in New York by the
CONTINENTAL NATIONAL BANK, No. 7 Nassau Street;
CLARK, DODGE & CO., BANKERS, No. 51 Wall St.;
JOHN J. CISCO & SON, BANKERS, No. 33 Wall St.;
HENRY CLEWS & CO., BANKERS, No. 32 Wall St.;
And by Banks and Bankers generally throughout the United States, of whom maps and descriptive pamphlets may be obtained. They will also be sent by mail from the Company's Office, No. 20 Nassau St., New York, on application. Subscribers will select their own Agents in whom they have confidence, who alone will be responsible to them for the safe delivery of the Bonds.
JOHN J. CISCO,
TREASURER, NEW YORK.

Advertisement for shares in the Union Pacific Railroad, Harper's Weekly, August 10, 1867. GILDER LEHRMAN COLLECTION.



UTAH CENTRAL RAILROAD—UTAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

the owners of property west of Ogden City. He offered to buy the property as the site of “a railroad town and a depot.”⁷² The lot owners agreed to sell 133 acres at a bargain rate of \$50 per acre “provided the property was for a railroad town.”⁷³ In early January, Young took Durant and Stanford to inspect the property and offered it to the railroads free of charge. Needless to say they agreed to the proposition.⁷⁴

Young had acted none too soon. Within the month, grading parties were “busily at work” between the mouth of Weber Canyon and Ogden.⁷⁵ On March 8, 1869, the Union Pacific track reached Ogden and citizens turned out for a grand celebration. “Hail to the Highway of the Nations!” Joseph Hall wrote in an article for the *Deseret News*.⁷⁶

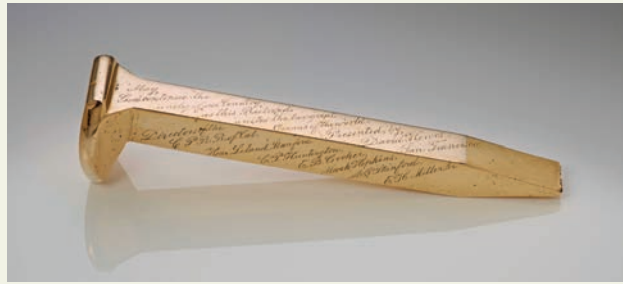
From mid-November 1868, it had become apparent that the respective railroad grades that Latter-day Saint crews were building for the UP and CP would bypass each other. Young smilingly remarked that perhaps “we are to have two lines from Ogden to Humboldt Wells, as both Companies have let grading contracts between these points.”⁷⁷

The graders for both companies continued to work in parallel, even crossing over each other occasionally as the competing companies hoped to capture the promised bonds, rights-of-way, and lands attached to their respective lines. North of Ogden, Sharp & Young crews were grading



Parallel railroad grades can be seen today between Corrine, Utah, and Monument Point at the north end of the Great Salt Lake. BLM PHOTOGRAPH.

just a quarter mile west of Chauncey West's crew. North of Willard, UP and CP surveyors pounded



Durant dropped a California golden spike and commemorative spikes from Nevada and Arizona into place

in stakes next to one another, and between Bear River and Promontory the lines crossed each other five times at different grades.⁷⁸ To end the competition, the Union and Central Pacific agreed to a connection point at Promontory Summit, and they established the "common terminus" at Ogden. Central Pacific agreed to buy the Union Pacific track from Promontory to Ogden, and the railroad companies got Congress to ratify the deal.⁷⁹ Interestingly, both railroads built their depots at a Latter-day Saint town rather than at Corinne, a Gentile town near Promontory Summit. Ogden quickly supplanted Provo as Utah's second largest city, and Corinne became a virtual ghost town before stabilizing as a sleepy farming community.

The railroads finally joined, and the commemorative celebration was held at Promontory Summit on May 10, 1869. Leland Stanford and Grenville Dodge spoke, and Samuel Reed and James Strobridge placed a laurel tie. Stanford and

and gave them symbolic light taps.⁸⁰ Young did not attend, but John Sharp, Chauncey West, and Lorin Farr were there as his representatives.⁸¹ In Salt Lake City, at the signal that the rails had wedded, a cannon fired on Arsenal Hill, the current location of the Utah State Capitol building, and bands played and additional dignitaries spoke.⁸²

With the completion of the transcontinental railroad, Young's responsibilities to his employees had just begun. On August 12, 1868, Young had received the first payment on his grading contract, \$150,000.⁸³ By May 1869 Union and Central Pacific had each paid \$1 million to the Utah grading contractors, but this was less than half the amount the railroads owed.⁸⁴ The UP owed Young "upwards of a million dollars" beyond what he had been paid, and CP owed West, Farr, and Benson an additional "million and a quarter of dollars."⁸⁵ UP was essentially bankrupt and could not or would not pay Young, and while CP's incorporators had themselves raked in huge profits,



Main Street of Corinne, Utah. UTAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.



the company itself had no funds with which to pay its Utah contractors. One of these, Ezra T. Benson, died in September 1869—within months of the completion of the railroad—in part from the stress of being unable to meet his financial commitments.⁸⁶

In September 1869 John Sharp, as Brigham's representative, traveled east to meet with C. G. Hammond, UP General Superintendent, in Omaha and UP President Oliver Ames in Boston, but his attempts to secure payment were futile.⁸⁷ Somewhat later, George Q. Cannon and Thomas W. Ellerbeck, two of Young's business partners, learned that Union Pacific had no intention of paying what was owed.⁸⁸ However, with Ames's approval, Hammond sent \$599,460 worth of surplus railroad equipment to Utah in May 1870, including rails, spikes, and rolling stock. These materials would be used in constructing and operating the Utah Central Railroad and were thus invaluable to the Saints, but they represented barely more than a quarter of what was owed to

Latter-day Saint contractors.⁸⁹ Although Union Pacific agreed to pay an additional \$200,000 to Young, there is no evidence that they ever did so.⁹⁰

As valuable as they were to the Utah Central, the supplies did little to ameliorate Young's indebtedness to his subcontractors and their employees who had graded the UP roadbed. As of April 1870 Young still owed 94 subcontractors a total of \$354,867.⁹¹ He borrowed \$125,000 from Oliver Ames at 9% interest to pay part of the obligation.⁹² By March 1871 he still owed \$90,356—and he sought additional resources, including ZCMI stock, bonds of the Utah Central Railroad, and cash on hand. This still left him \$10,000 short of the amount required.⁹³ By April 1871 he had reduced the debt to a manageable \$2,000.⁹⁴ In future years he would repay all funds he had borrowed to pay his subcontractors. The executors of Young's estate estimated that he earned a profit of \$88,000 on the contract, but it is unclear that he actually realized any net income after paying the interest on the funds he borrowed.⁹⁵

JOSEPH A. WEST—
son of Chauncey W. West



Benson, Farr, and West had even less success securing payment from Central Pacific. When Chauncey W. West traveled to San Francisco to meet with Leland Stanford and other CP officers, they refused to pay him. West's son, Joseph A. West, watched as his father "broke down under the strain" and died in San Francisco in 1870 at age forty-three. John Sharp later secured a settlement from Central Pacific for all but \$200,000 that was owed to Benson, Farr, and West, but none of the men earned a profit on the contracts.⁹⁶ Joseph West wrote of the three partners that they lost all "that they had beside, through legally enforced sales by impatient contractors . . . [and] all that was finally recovered to meet the sub-contractors' demands."⁹⁷

In view of the skullduggery perpetrated on Latter-day Saint contractors—and hundreds of Latter-day Saint employees—by Union Pacific and Central Pacific, one might initially fail to see praiseworthy elements in the collective Latter-day Saint experience grading segments of the transcontinental railroad.

Nevertheless, the coming of the railroad had many positive long- and short-term effects in Utah. In the long run,

subcontractors received the payments due them largely through personal borrowing by Brigham Young and the work of John Sharp. Members of the community received badly needed income from jobs created during the year of grading. And as predicted, the railroad helped to alleviate the food shortages that had resulted from the ravages of locusts in 1868–9. As the first trains reached Ogden beginning in 1868, the price of flour fell to a reasonable eight dollars per hundred pounds from eleven or twelve dollars.⁹⁸ The expected efficiency of passenger travel for immigrants was also realized and the Utah Central Railroad benefitted substantially from the supplies and rolling stock it received from Union Pacific.

The arrival of the railroad and its expansion in Utah also had important long-term effects. While it was completed at great cost, especially to Young, West, Benson, and Farr and their families, the railroad was a vital utility, and, for the first time, it effectively connected Utah to the rest of the country. Rail lines within Utah remain a crucial part of Utah's economy and a key to continued growth. ▣

CONSTRUCTION TRAIN NEAR GREEN RIVER—

PHOTO BY SAVAGE &
OTTINGER, LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS.



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1 David Haward Bain, *Empire Express: Building the First Transcontinental Railroad* (1999), 35.

2 *Deseret Evening News* (hereafter *DEN*), 10 Jun and 24 Nov 1868.

3 Thomas G. Alexander, *Brigham Young and the Expansion of the Mormon Faith* (2019), 93; *DEN*, 10 Jun 1868.

4 Gunnison and seven others were murdered by Pahvant Utes on the Sevier River near present-day Delta, Utah (Bain 51).

5 Thomas Durant did this by connecting to another railroad in which he had an interest.

6 *US Statutes at Large* 489. Issued initially as first-mortgage bonds, these were, in 1864 and at railroad lobbyists' behest, converted by Congress into second-mortgage bonds, enabling railroads to sell their own as more attractive first-mortgage bonds.

7 Bain 124–25.

8 Bain 197.

9 Bain 195–6; Steven E. Ambrose, *Nothing Like It in the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad* (2000), 170.

10 Bain 183–4.

11 *DEN*, 12 Sep 1868.

12 Brigham Young sermon, 16 Aug 1868. In *Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, microfilm, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University (hereafter JH).

13 Both railroad companies used tactics giving company officials millions

of dollars through constructing rather than operating the railroads. Each of the lines organized a construction company, and officers in both of these companies sold or gave away construction company stock to Congressmen, Senators, and others from whom they expected favors.

14 Bain 255. Irish immigrants were disparaged by other American whites and, like the Chinese, could be hired at lower wages.

15 Bain 207–9.

16 Bain 308.

17 Ambrose, 170, 183, 187.

18 *DEN*, 9 Jun and 3 Aug 1868; see also *DEN*, 17 Jun 1868, JH (locusts in Cedar Valley), 22 Jun 1868 (locusts near the railroad line in Morgan County), 27 Jun and 24 Aug 1868 ("ravages of grasshoppers" at Santaquin in Utah Valley), 30 Jun 1868, "myriads of grasshoppers," in North Willow Creek—now Willard—in Box Elder County), 8 Jul 1868 (grasshoppers had ravaged crops in Ogden Valley).

19 *DEN*, 26 May 1868; Leonard Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (1958), 246. The fear of "bummers, gamblers, saloon and hurdy-gurdy keepers, border ruffians, and desperadoes" is mentioned in George Reynolds to G. F. Gibbs, 4 Jun 1868, JH.

20 Brigham Young to Franklin D. Richards, 23 May 1868, JH.

21 *Ibid*; also George Q. Cannon encourages cheap importation of machinery, in "Moves Which Ought to Be Made," *DEN*, 6 Jun 1868.

22 Cannon op. cit.; Saints urged to prepare by engaging in new manufacturing endeavors, *DEN*, 10 Aug 1868.

23 George Q. Cannon, "Imports and Exports—Territorial Prosperity," *DEN*, 18 Jun 1868.

24 "Memoranda of Agreement," between Brigham Young and the Union Pacific Railroad Company, 20 May 1868, Brigham Young Office Files, 1832–1878; Union Pacific Contract Files (hereafter UP); Central Railroad Files, CR 1234 (hereafter CR); Church History Library, Salt Lake City (hereafter CHL).

25 Robert G. Athearn, "Contracting for the Union Pacific," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 37 (Winter 1969): 17–8.

26 Athearn, "Contracting," 18.

27 "Memoranda of Agreement."

28 *DEN*, 9 and 12 Jun 1868.

29 *DEN*, 18 Jun 1868.

30 *DEN*, 16 Jun 1868.

31 *DEN*, 11 Jul 1868.

32 *DEN*, 16 Jul 1868.

33 E. L. S. "The Railroad in the Cañons," *Deseret News Weekly* (hereafter *DN*), 20 Jul 1868.

34 E. L. S. "Our Local's Correspondence—No. III: The Railroad in the Cañons," *DEN*, 22 and 23 Jul 1868.

35 *DEN*, 5 Sep 1868.

36 *DEN*, 1 Feb 1869; *DN*, 10 Feb 1869.

37 E. L. S. "The Railroad in the Cañons," *DN*, 21 Jul 1868.

38 E. L. S., "Our Local's Correspondence—No III: The Railroad in the Cañons," *DEN*, 22 and 23 July 1868.

39 *DEN*, 16 Sep 1868.

40 George Q. Cannon, "Work and Good Wages for All," *DEN*, 14 Sep 1868. Cannon expected Young's second contract to cover "about one hundred and fifty miles." This was an overestimate.

41 Brigham Young to Albert Carrington, 18 Nov 1868, JH.

42 *DEN*, 9 and 12 Jun 1868.

43 *DEN*, 18 Jun 1868.

44 *DEN*, 11 Jul 1868; Andrew Jenson, ed., *Latter-day Saint Biographical Ency-*

clopedia (2012), 1: 615.

45 *DEN*, 2 Jul 1868.

46 Anon, *DEN*, 13 Jul 1868.

47 E. L. S., "Our Local's Correspondence—No. VII: The Railroad in the Cañons," *DEN*, 4 Aug 1868.

48 Ibid.

49 *DEN*, 16 Jul 1868.

50 E. L. S., "Our Local's Correspondence—No. IV: The Railroad in the Cañons," *DEN*, 29 and 31 Jul 1868.

51 E. L. S., "Our Local's Correspondence, No X: The Railroad in the Cañons," *DEN*, 2 Aug 1868.

52 George Q. Canon to Albert Car-
rington, 4 Nov 1868.

53 Brigham Young to Albert Car-
rington, 5 Jan 1869.

54 Brigham Young to Albert Car-
rington, 4 Feb 1869.

55 *DEN*, 4 Feb 1869. An article in the
Deseret Evening News of 6 April 1869
reports the big tunnel was not com-
pleted until 2 Apr 1869.

56 Bain 489.

57 West 8.

58 Brigham Young to Franklin D. Rich-
ards, 4 Aug 1868. Bain 537–8.

59 "Our Local's Correspondence, Bear
River North," *DEN*, 19 Nov 1868.

60 JH, 18 Nov 1868.

61 *DN*, 9 Dec 1868 and 3 Feb 1869.

62 E. L. S., *DEN*, 20 and 31 Jul 1868.

63 Anon., "Rolling In," *DEN*, 20 Jul 1868.

64 Brigham Young to Albert Car-
rington, Salt Lake City, 18 Nov 1868,
JH.

65 *DEN*, 20 Jun 1868.

66 *DEN*, 26 Sep 1868.

67 *DEN*, 5 Oct 1868.

68 *DEN*, 27 Dec 1868.

69 Brigham Young to Albert Car-
rington, 5 Jan 1869, JH.

70 JH, 3 Mar 1869.

71 JH, 8 Mar 1869.

72 *DEN*, 31 Dec 1869.

73 *DEN*, 1 and 4 Jan 1869; Arrington,
Great Basin Kingdom, 265.

74 Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*,
265.

75 *DEN*, 22 Dec 1868.

76 JH, 8 Mar 1869.

77 Brigham Young to Albert Car-
rington, 18 Nov 1868, JH.

78 Bain, 568–9, 618.

79 JH, 23 Apr 1869; *DEN* 28 Apr 1869;
Bain 633–34; Arrington 265.

80 Bain 666.

81 Bain 659.

82 JH, 10 May 1869.

83 JH, 12 Aug 1868.

84 Bain 659–60; Arrington 265.

85 *Deseret News*, 6 Sep 1869, cited
in Arrington, *Great Basin
Kingdom*, 266.

86 Arrington 265.

87 John Sharp to C. G. Hammond,
General Superintendent and Repre-
sentative of UPRR, 30 Sep 1869, CR; UP;
Brigham Young Office Files, 1832–
1878; John Sharp to Oliver Ames, 11
Oct 1869, (Brigham Young Office Files,
1832–1878) CHL.

88 W. Davis [probably James W. Davis,
Train's son-in-law], to George F. Train,
7 Sep 1869, certified copy made by
George Q. Cannon and Thomas W.
Ellerbeck, Brigham Young Office Files,
1832–1878, UP, CHL.

89 Oliver Ames to C. G. Hammond, 2
Sep 1869, Brigham Young Office Files,
1832–1878; C. G. Hammond to Oliver
Ames, 11 May 1870, Brigham Young
Office Files, 1832–1878, UP, CHL.

90 Arrington 267.

91 "Statements of Indebtedness to the
Railroad Contractors, April 1870 –April
1871" (hereafter "Statements of Indebt-
edness"), 20 Apr 1870, Brigham Young
Office Files, 1832–1878, CHL.

92 Arrington 269

93 "Statements of Indebtedness," 25
Mar 1871, Brigham Young Office Files,
CHL; Arrington 267–9.

94 "Statements of Indebtedness," 7 Apr
1871, Brigham Young Office Files, CHL.

95 Arrington 268–9.

96 Arrington 265.

97 West 8.

98 George A. Smith to W. S. Elderkin,
14 Apr 1869.

Pioneer VIGNETTES

Excerpts from *Engines of Change: Railroads in Utah, "Our Past, Their Present,"* Utah Division of State History, online.

WILLIAM G. SMITH

"Smith's family emigrated to the U.S. from England and settled in Huntsville, Utah. As a young man he worked for both the Union Pacific and Central Pacific to help build the first transcontinental line. His later work took him through Ogden and Corinne regularly.

'Later that year, 1863, we moved to Huntsville. I knew old Captain Hunt, who settled it. I worked on the Union Pacific Railroad when it was being built from Echo to Ogden in 1868 and 1869. When the grade had reached Peterson, Apostle Franklin D. Richards took a contract to move the wagon road from down in the river bottom to the side of the hill above the tracks. He hired me for \$5 a day and board for myself and yoke of oxen. We cut the road on the hillside and he was paid so much a cubic yard for removing the earth. Then we piled the earth on the grade for the railroad, and he was paid so much a yard for the fill, and thus made money both ways.

'When the road progressed as far as Promontory station, Benson, Farr, and West, a firm of contractors, had a hundred mile contract on the Central Pacific building east. Just about a mile west of where the golden spike was driven they had to make a cut of about a mile. This was heavy work and they were afraid they could not finish on time, so they sent word to Ogden to secure as many men as possible. Jack Wilson, Henry Bronson, and myself went out with yokes of oxen and helped them finish that cut. They paid us \$2.50 a day and board. We did most of the work with wheelbarrows as that was before the day of the steamshovels. . . ."



LIZZIE WEAVER BROWN

"Lizzie Weaver Brown immigrated to America from England as a child. Her family were among the first Mormon pioneers who were able to use the train instead of wagons, coming in 1869. A resident of Ogden, she remembers life there during this time of change.

When they arrived in New York, and [Lizzie's father] went to get his transportation, he found that a mistake had been made, and it had been given to another person. He was rather stunned at first. . . . He decided to remain in New York and work at his trade as a stone mason until he was able to pay his own fare to Utah. This took him about three and a half years, and in the meantime the railroad had been completed, and they were spared the hardship of crossing the plains by ox teams or handcarts. . . . The family reached Ogden in the fall of 1869. Mrs. [Lizzie] Brown, although only six years of age at the time, remembers how those old trains would stop and the Indians would get on. Lizzie tells what happened in her own words:

'I don't remember of ever hearing of [the Indians] doing any harm. . . . It was the first time I had seen Indians and I was very frightened.

'The first home we lived in in Utah was a tent, but it didn't take my father long to build us a two room house. We settled out at Riverdale, where we had a nice farm. My father worked at his trade . . . besides the work on the farm. We got here after some of the worst hardships were over. I don't remember of any times of famine, and as the railroad came through and trade was opened, we hadn't the worry of clothing that the early pioneers had.'" ■

CONNECTING EAST AND WEST:

THE SOUTH'S
MISSED
OPPORTUNITY



BY MARKO DEMONJA

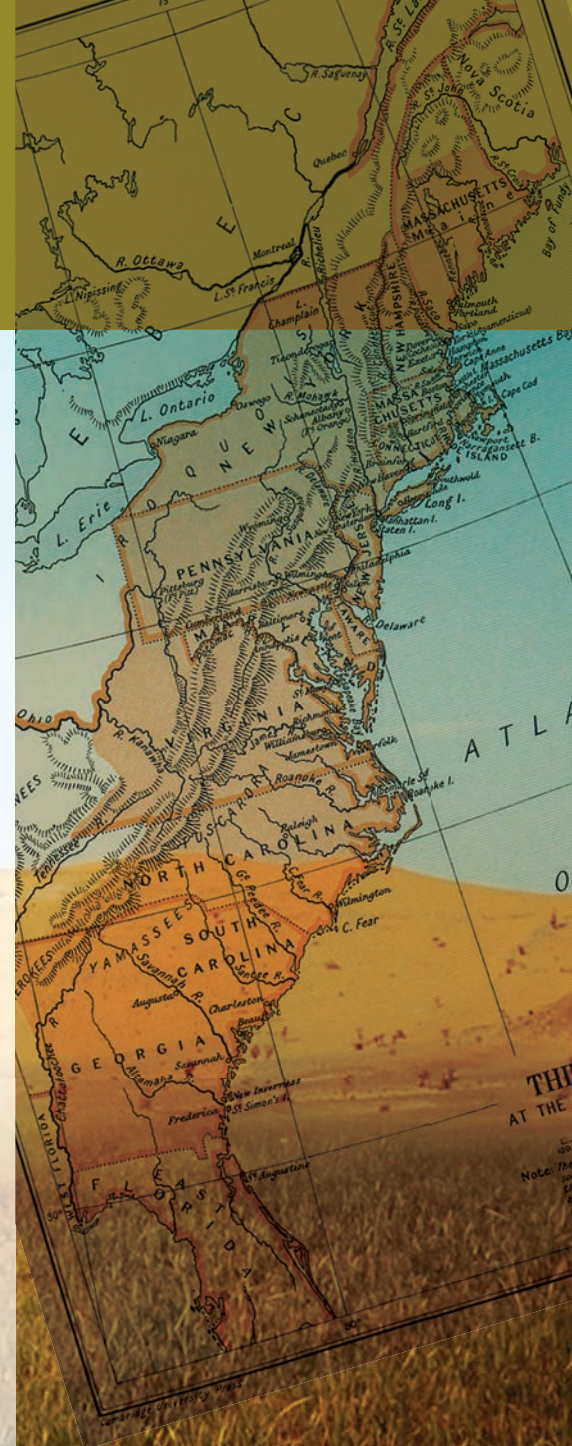
The transcontinental railroad was the supreme technological feat of its day, but engineering and technology weren't the primary motivations for its construction. The great prize would be the tremendous economic benefits that would follow the rails as they passed from coast to coast through the country's heartland and through towns and cities and new states in the West, connecting the urban ports on the eastern seaboard to the rapidly growing markets on the Pacific Coast.

The first transcontinental railway was originally expected to go through the southern United States, linking Charleston, South Carolina, with ports in Southern California, passing through Texas, New Mexico, and yet-to-be-named Arizona on its way. This southern route was less mountainous than other possible routes and less affected by winter weather—and it made good economic and geographical sense.

It is difficult to overestimate the economic value this route might have held for the southern states, but the South chose to sacrifice it to a very different economic dream. To understand why southern politicians, plantation owners, and industrialists made this choice, we must go back to the time immediately after the American Revolution. During the late 1780s the thirteen former British colonies, each with its own history and status, were somewhat painfully transitioning toward statehood as we now understand it.

The primary difficulty of this transition process was knowing how much power the national government should have, and how much should be retained by state or local governments. Today, the term *states' rights* is understood to mean the particular rights reserved to member states of the United States of America—rights that may not be limited, appropriated, or mandated by the federal government.

But historically the term “state” had a meaning similar to the word “nation.” In 1776, when the United States of America was created, “state” was understood to be a self-governing entity—and not the subordinate geographical divisions now comprising the Union. While the Declaration



KNOWN AS THE
CONSTITUTIONAL
CONVENTION,

**DELEGATES MET IN
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CIOUS SOVEREIGNTY.**

of Independence emphasized the rights and grievances of the nation-state, declaring a national course of separation and sovereignty, it clearly assumed the sovereignty and independence of the nation's member-states as well.

The first government of the new nation was established by the Articles of Confederation and came into being in the spring of 1781. This national government was true to the early intent of the Founders, having no executive or judicial branches. And its legislative branch was tightly controlled: new laws could be created only by unanimous vote. There were no provisions for national taxation of US citizens or for the maintenance of a standing national military. Such powers were retained by the individual and largely sovereign states.

By late 1786 it was obvious that, without a stronger central government, the United States could become a second Europe. It was feared that growing conflicts among the states and deepening resistance to national controls would provoke states to seek greater power and increased sovereignty—which, without a unifying central government or national military to intervene, would lead to armed confrontations. To preserve the Union, all states but Rhode Island agreed to send delegates to a conference in Philadelphia that would consider ways to strengthen the existing national government.





Eventually known as the Constitutional Convention, the conference lasted from late May through mid-September 1787. Early on, most delegates agreed that revising the existing government was impractical. It would have to be replaced by an entirely new form of government, one requiring states to give up some of their precious sovereignty. Thus began the making of the Constitution of the United States—a legal document creating a new federal government of three separate branches (legislative, executive, and judicial), specifying the powers and duties of each, and balancing the respective powers against one another. The document also specified relationships between the federal government and the states and among states and their residents, together with how the Constitution was to be amended and ratified.

Despite the fact that, by June 1788, enough states had voted in favor of the Constitution to secure its ratification, some worried that the new government was too much like the British government from which they had just gained their freedom. Nevertheless, in facing the dilemma of two “evils”—accepting the Constitution and an expanded central government or standing alone against the nations of the world, including the new United States—the skeptical states chose to support the Constitution. Such grudging support was especially evident in the responses of two powerful southern states, Virginia and South Carolina. Ironically, the Constitution

of Virginia had provided especially important framework and details to the new national constitution.

Virginia was the oldest of the thirteen British colonies, established in 1607 at Jamestown thirteen years before the first Pilgrims landed at Cape Cod. Because they had survived against seemingly impossible odds, Virginians were especially proud of their “first colony” status. Many of the original founders of South Carolina were favorites of King Charles—British nobility who had received royal land grants in the New World. Defining themselves as “gentleman farmers” and as citizens of breeding and refinement, these founders prided themselves on their academic and aesthetic understanding and their philosophies of “necessary” social distinction. Put differently, Virginians and South Carolinians considered themselves above other southerners, including North Carolinians and Georgians, whom they saw as lower-class. All the South looked with disdain at residents of the Northern colonies—uncultured, religiously fanatic Yankees. Of course, northerners looked at southerners with equal distaste—materialistic, socially stratified, and godless “slavocrats.”¹

It is safe to say that, in ratifying the Constitution, each of the first states was motivated not so much by a spirit of patriotism or unity as by the will to survive. And in accepting the Constitution, each state made a grudging sacrifice. Virginia and South Carolina, for example, agreed (at least in principle) to give equal status to the other eleven states, and northern states swallowed the bitter pill of what some northerners considered the undue influence of southern state constitutions (including that of Virginia) on the national document.

After ratification of the Constitution and, later, the Bill of Rights, and after the three branches of the

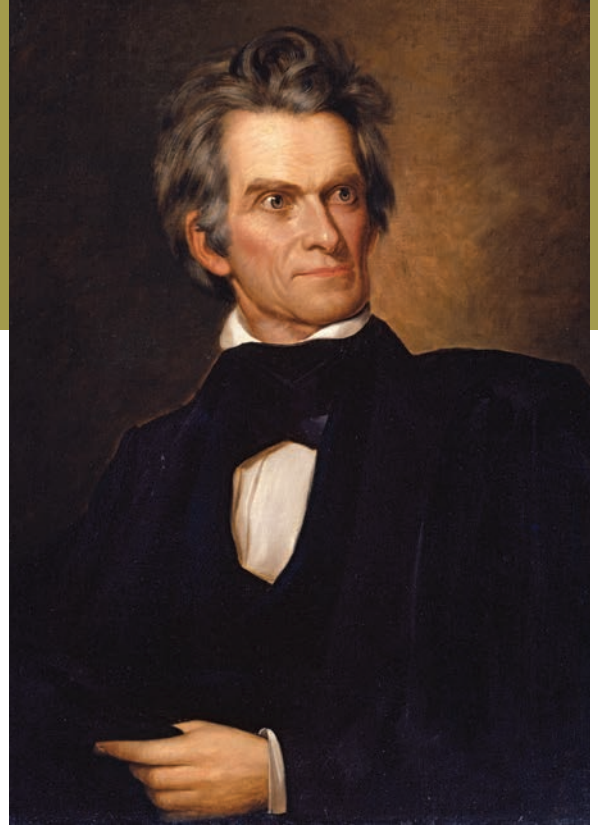


JOHN C. CALHOUN— *Father of Secession*

new government began to operate, a concept called “nullification” arose. Largely in response to the Alien and Sedition Acts (1798), which they considered unconstitutional, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, both powerful men of influence from Virginia, secretly wrote and sponsored the Kentucky Resolutions of 1798 and the Virginia Resolution (1798), respectively. These resolutions rested on the assumption that the Constitution existed only because the states had created it and continued to uphold it. If the federal government abused its power by assuming rights not specified in the Constitution or by passing laws contrary to it, any state theoretically could call the government on such actions by overriding assumed federal rights or by declaring unconstitutional laws to be null and void.

While the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions were passed by the respective legislatures of those states, representatives of all other states agreed that nullification would send the nation down a slippery slope towards dissolution. Still, the concept of nullification didn’t go away. It was raised by Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island in response to the Embargo Act of 1807, by Connecticut and Massachusetts in response to federal requests for standing militias during the War of 1812, and, most notably, by South Carolina during the “nullification crisis” of 1828–1833.

When Congress levied the Tariff of 1828, it was quickly dubbed the Tariff of Abominations by southerners, who saw it as the unjust means of championing northern industry at the expense of southern agriculture. While supposedly protecting northern manufacturing interests against cheaper goods imported from Europe, the 38% tariff applied to more than 90% of all imported



goods. More tellingly, the Tariff of 1828 exacted a 45% tax on raw materials (including cotton and tobacco) grown in the South and exported to the North.

John C. Calhoun, a native South Carolinian and US Vice-President at the time, worked against the wishes of President Andrew Jackson to change or remove the tariff. Calhoun dusted off the concept of nullification, encouraging South Carolina’s legislature to declare the tariff unconstitutional. Calhoun went so far as to assert that nullification logically empowered a state to nullify the Constitution itself and secede from the Union. Calhoun was thus known as the “Father of Secession.”

In the fall of 1832 South Carolina convened a special state convention to nullify relevant tariff laws. They also passed a resolution, effective the following spring, prohibiting tariff collection. Had the resolution taken effect, it would have

given South Carolina an important advantage over other states. Its ports would have become preferred destinations for all ships carrying foreign goods, and Charleston would have displaced seaports like Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore as a financial and cultural center.



SOUTH CAROLINA



Andrew Jackson had been elected President of the United States in 1829. Known as “Old Hickory,” he was a tough westerner from Tennessee with a chip on his shoulder. He believed his election had put an end to the “Virginia Aristocracy,” a reference to the fact that four of the first six presidents had come from the Virginia planter class. It was especially frustrating to him, then, that his own vice-president was the leader of a rebellion perpetuated by another branch of the southern aristocracy.

And so Jackson worked with Congress to draft the Force Bill, a relatively simple act declaring that, if any state refused to collect the tariff, the President had authority from Congress to force that state to adhere to the law, using military action if necessary. Insisting they would not be bullied, South Carolina threatened to secede from the Union if the Force Bill were passed. A crisis was averted when, in early March 1833, a compromise tariff was passed in tandem with the

Force Bill, and South Carolina withdrew its articles of secession. As a final act of defiance, however, South Carolina’s legislature declared the Force Bill null and void to reinforce its claim to states’ rights and nullification power.

To understand how the route, timing, and nature of the transcontinental railroad was affected by the states’ rights issue and by the economic and political power of the southern states, two other interlocked issues must be considered: slavery and westward expansion. In 1820 Missouri became the first territory from the Louisiana Purchase (1803) to apply for statehood, thereby giving rise to a divisive question: “Should slavery be allowed in a new state?”

In response, Congress passed in 1820 the law known as the Missouri Compromise. It allowed slavery to be practiced in any new state south of Missouri’s southern border but established that there

TWO INTERLOCKING ISSUES—





would be no slavery north of that line as it extended west to the Continental Divide. While the Compromise prohibited slavery throughout much of the area associated with western expansion, the South saw it as an important victory because all new territories conducive to the growing of cotton—the primary labor-intensive crop of the plantation system—were south of the line.

Following the annexation of Texas in 1845 and the Mexican War of 1846–1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded to the US the Mexican territories of Alta California and New Mexico, and the nation's western borders were extended to the Pacific Coast. Purchased from Mexico for \$15 million, this region incorporated what would eventually become the states of Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. The US now owned significant lands stretching coast to coast, and almost immediately plans were being proposed for a railroad connecting east and west, a railroad opening dramatically increased possibilities for domestic trade as well as trade across the Pacific Ocean.

Because railroads already connected Charleston and New Orleans, two of the most active seaports in the country, developers agreed that the obvious transcontinental rail route would extend from New Orleans across the southern flatlands of Texas and

continue west to the coast. The only hitch was that this route required traversing the San Francisco and Galiuro Mountains along the southern border of the New Mexico Territory.² Southern politicians called for the acquisition of additional territory from Mexico so that the railroad could pass mostly south of larger mountain ranges and continue on to California. Congress commissioned a South Carolinian, James Gadsden, to negotiate the purchase. The result was the Treaty of Mesilla, ratified by Congress in 1854 as the Gadsden Purchase. The US paid Mexico \$10 million for territory comprising the southwestern corner of present-day New Mexico and much of southern Arizona. The Gadsden Purchase shows that, while US western expansion drove early dreams of a continental rail system, the railway also drove western expansion: the purchase was motivated almost entirely by southern railway interests.

Western expansion also remained locked into the slavery debate. While the Compromise of 1850 dictated that California would be admitted to the Union as a free state and that slavery in the remainder of the Mexican Cession would be decided by “popular sovereignty,” and while the Gadsden Purchase had been proclaimed similarly open to slavery, southerners weren't satisfied. In fact, the South was beginning to realize it had a major problem.

BY 1848 THE US NOW OWNED SIGNIFICANT LANDS STRETCHING COAST TO COAST—ALMOST IMMEDIATELY



PLANS WERE BEING PROPOSED FOR A RAILROAD CONNECTING EAST AND WEST.

The only geographical area in the Mexican Cession that could support a cotton economy was California. Outside California, by far the largest group of people living in the territory were Latter-day Saints—who had always been anti-slavery. The Gadsden Purchase was comprised almost exclusively of desert lands. Suddenly, the future of the South's economic system seemed in jeopardy. Indeed, the potential number of states that might be created from US territories made it clear that, at some point, free states would outnumber slave states by more than two to one—and that a Constitutional amendment ending slavery would then be passed.

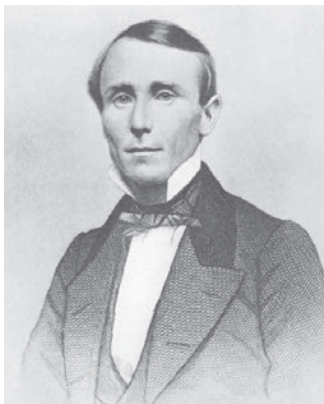
The South felt backed into a political corner and searched desperately for more slave territory. During the mid-1800s western expansion was driven by the concept of Manifest Destiny, the belief that the United States had a God-given right to expand to and beyond its natural borders. Indeed, many nineteenth-century Americans believed that the United States should expand throughout the Western Hemisphere. Thus, Southerners looked south of borders for land with slave potential.

In the fall of 1853, for example, William Walker³—a twenty-nine-year-old native of Tennessee and pro-slavery activist—put together a small “army” of forty-five men, most of them from Tennessee and Kentucky, who traveled on horseback to sparsely populated Baja California. Walker's plan was to conquer the peninsula; to introduce slavery there; and to re-establish the peninsula as the Republic of Sonora. Long-term, he hoped his republic would become a US state as had happened

earlier with the Republic of Texas. After capturing the capital, La Paz, in early November, he named himself President of the Republic of Sonora. Playing cat-and-mouse with Mexican troops, and changing his headquarters several times, Walker and his men were forced to retreat back to the US by mid-spring 1854.

Walker tried a similar tactic in the civil-war torn republic of Nicaragua in the spring of 1855. Encouraged by the 1854 Ostend Manifesto—a proposal devised by Southerners to acquire Cuba and divide it into one or more slave states⁴—Walker allied himself with one side of the civil war to defeat the other and was able to install himself as president of Nicaragua in the spring of 1856. He began a program of Americanization, reinstated slavery, and immediately applied to the US for statehood as a slave state. Southern newspapers proclaimed him a hero and Congress was tempted by Walker's proposal, as Nicaragua held one of two viable routes for a canal to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. However, political considerations led Congress to ignore the proposal,⁵ and four years later Walker was removed from office and executed by a coalition of Central American governments.

During this time when the South could feel its political influence declining, Stephen A. Douglas,

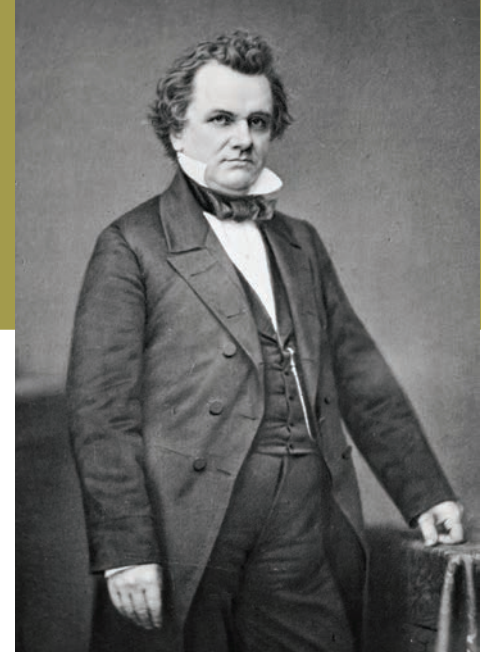


WILLIAM WALKER

las realized that if the first transcontinental railroad line followed a northern rather than a southern route—traversing the Sierra Nevadas, the Rocky Mountains, and the northern plains—Chicago would become a primary hub and Douglas' state of Illinois would be greatly enriched. He also realized that without the southern vote, his plan would fail. So he combined his argument for a northern

THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT PASSED CONGRESS IN MAY 1854 AND ESTABLISHED THAT POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY WOULD DETERMINE

WHETHER SLAVERY WOULD BE ALLOWED IN A NEW STATE. THE ACT WAS DRAFTED BY ILLINOIS SENATOR STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS, A PROPONENT OF A NORTHERN ROUTE FOR THE TRANS-CONTINENTAL RAILROAD, ONE PASSING THROUGH ILLINOIS AND NEBRASKA.



transcontinental rail route with the proposal that popular sovereignty be restored as the determiner of the “slave/free” question in all future states emerging from western territories, including territory from the Louisiana Purchase.

The South took the bait, and Douglas’ Kansas-Nebraska Act passed Congress in May 1854. While Southerners would continue to look outside the United States for new slave territory, there was now a more immediate hope. They simply had to get other pro-slavery settlers to move into western territories and, when the time came, vote for slavery. But those who opposed slavery realized a similar fact: they simply needed to move people into western territories who would vote against slavery. Southern Democrats banded together. Northern Democrats joined with Whigs, Free-Soilers, and Know-Nothings to form the new Republican Party and to establish the party’s central goal—as stated in its 1856 party platform—of ridding the United States of “the twin relics of barbarism, polygamy and slavery.”

Settlers poured into the territories of Kansas and Nebraska. Anti-slavery proponents easily outnumbered those who were for slavery. The 1860 census records only two slaves among 107,000 inhabitants of Kansas and only fifteen slaves in Nebraska. People began saying that pro-slavery hopes revolved around “an imaginary Negro in an impossible place.” The conflict even infiltrated the US Senate chambers.

After northern Senator Charles Sumner gave a speech decrying the growing violence in Kansas and referring to proslavery settlers as “hirelings picked from the drunken spew and vomit of an uneasy [southern] civilization,” Senator Preston Brooks of South Carolina shouted that, as a gentleman, he was honor-bound to respond. Before Sumner could leave the Senate floor, Brooks attacked him with his cane, beating him nearly to death. Onlooking senators chose not to intervene. Soon, however, senators on both sides were arming themselves with defensive weapons—pistols and knives—before attending sessions at the Capitol.

When news of the Brooks-Sumner incident reached John Brown⁶ and his followers in Kansas, Brown led an attack on proslavery settlers, killing five of them. This action, of course, led to the violence that gave Kansas Territory its tragic nickname “Bleeding Kansas” and that ultimately escalated into the Civil War.

The story of selecting the route for the first transcontinental railroad is a complex mixture of politics, economics, regional pride, greed, power, westward expansionism, and religion. The then-powerful and influential South could have chosen a different path. To maintain its power and influence, it could have begun a methodical dismantling of its slavery economy by embracing new opportunities and benefits resulting from the first transcontinental railroad. Instead, the railroad and its benefits went to the North. Had the South chosen differently, the Kansas-Nebraska Act would not



"BLEEDING KANSAS" ULTIMATELY ESCALATED INTO THE CIVIL WAR.

have passed. Perhaps there would have been no Civil War, and the South would have avoided decimation and decline. Perhaps in linking South and West, the railroad would have bound together more than two coasts, helping the larger nation escape or at least subdue the regional stereotypes, suspicions, and motivations that continue to divide it. In its anchored breadth and promise, the railroad potentially embodied the nation's unifying security as well as its pioneering reach. ▣

Marko DeMonja received his bachelor's degree from Austin Peay State University and his master's degree from Ball State University in history. He taught history, government, economics, and English in high schools in three states for thirty-three years and has been an adjunct professor of history at Utah State University for ten years. He is a long-time resident of Brigham City, Utah.

1 "Slavocrats" was a derisive northern term for southerners, merging *slaveowners* and *Democrats*, given that southerners were overwhelmingly members of the Democratic Party.

2 The segment of the New Mexico Territory in question is in present-day southeastern Arizona.

3 William Walker had graduated *summa cum laude* from

the University of Nashville at age fourteen. He studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh; graduated with a degree in medicine from the University of Pennsylvania at age 19; then studied and practiced law in New Orleans before becoming co-owner and editor of the *New Orleans Crescent*. As a journalist, he was drawn by the Gold Rush to San Francisco, moving there in 1849.

4 The Ostend Manifesto of October 1854 proposed that the US offer Spain \$120 million for Cuba. Slavery already existed in Cuba, and slave populations there were large enough to support many additional plantations. The island could be divided into three or four states to counterbalance free states created from western territories. And if Spain refused to sell, the United States would be "justified in wresting" the island from Spain's control. While the Ostend Manifesto had a certain appeal, even in the North, domestic unrest over the slavery question made the proposal too hot to touch in late 1854.

5 Pushback from neighboring Central American countries and from northern industrialists with Central American interests led Congress to table the offer.

6 John Brown (1800–1859) was a religious zealot who believed he had a God-given calling to end the nation's slavery.



THE MOVEMENT WESTWARD, MURAL BY JOHN STEUART CURRY

THE CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF



UTAH'S

"MORMON RAILROADS"



CENTRAL PACIFIC RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION—UTAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BY WAYNE K. HINTON
SUP President-Elect

On Monday May 10, 1869, when Leland Stanford took his first swing at the “Golden Spike” and missed, causing the telegraph operator to prematurely send the long-anticipated message, “DONE,” a great national milestone had been achieved. A railroad now stretched across the United States from the East Coast to the West—the first railway in the world to cross a continent. Its completion marked the beginning of modern America, tying the nation together after the tragic and bloody Civil War.

While the Utah Territory was home to the grand celebration attending the completion of the transcontinental railroad, a problem remained for much of its population: the railway crossed the state many miles north of Utah’s capitol city, doing little to alleviate the isolation of most Utah residents.

When Congress passed legislation in April 1866 authorizing the Central Pacific to build track east beyond the Nevada border until it linked with Union Pacific, it became apparent that the two competing lines would be joined somewhere in Utah. Several northern Utah communities competed to become the “junction city”—the community that would host a union station where passengers aboard a train on one rail line could transfer to a train on the other. By early 1869 only two communities remained in serious competition: Corinne in Box Elder County and Ogden in Weber County. Already making plans for regional rail systems, the Saints lobbied hard for Ogden, knowing it would be much more open to con-

nections with Saints-owned rail lines than Corinne, the self-proclaimed “Gentile capitol of Utah.”

In March 1869 crews pushed the Union Pacific line through Ogden and on towards Promontory. Directed to do so by Brigham Young, authorities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints purchased 135 acres of land in West Ogden and offered it free of charge to the Union Pacific and Central Pacific companies if they would construct the junction station there. In November 1869 Central Pacific purchased a five-mile length of track west of Ogden that had been laid by Union Pacific crews, and the two companies announced plans for Union Station to be built on Church-donated lands in Ogden.¹

Formal plans for a network of regional railroads in Utah officially began on March 8, 1869, when Brigham Young organized the Utah Central Railroad Company. The first stockholders were all members of the Church and included prominent leaders.² The Church was well prepared to organize and carry out rail construction: thousands of Utah Saints had been members of Union Pacific or Central Pacific work crews responsible for constructing the respective rail lines within the Utah Territory.

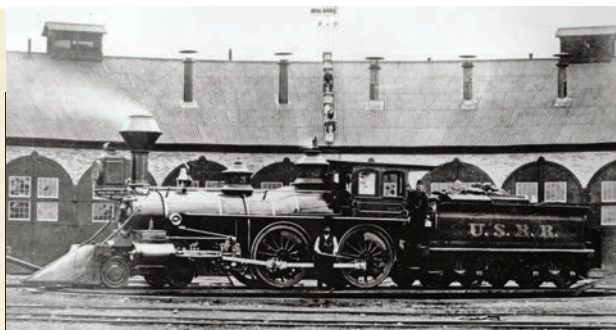
Surveying of the 36.34 miles of track from Ogden to Salt Lake City began on May 15, 1869, just five days after the driving of the Golden Spike, and Utah Central began laying track in September 1869.³ Work was supervised by bishops of wards from the various communities along the line. Some of the workers elected to receive their pay in stock or bonds, some were given credit for money bor-

rowed from the Perpetual Emigration Fund, and some received free rail tickets. A few donated their time; in such cases, the Church itself was credited the relevant number of stock shares.

The Utah Central line between Ogden and Salt Lake City was completed and the last spike driven on Monday, January 10, 1870. The mallet used to drive the last spike bore the inscription, “Holiness to the Lord”—the phrase adorning the outer walls of Latter-day Saint temples—plus the emblem of the beehive and the letters UCRR.⁴ At the dedication Colonel B. O. Carr, a Union Pacific director, noted the admirable independence of the Utah Saints when he said, “The Utah Central Railroad ... is perhaps the only railroad west of the Missouri River that has been built entirely without government subsidies.”⁵ The Church continued to manage this railroad until 1879 when Utah Central Railroad was taken over by Union Pacific.⁶

The second railroad established by Church members was the Utah Southern Railroad Company, organized January 7, 1871. Many of its stockholders also held stock in Utah Central. Ground was broken May 1, 1871, and the first spike was driven June 5. By September, thirteen miles of railway had

This engraved mallet head and silver spike were used at the completion of the Utah Central Railroad connecting Salt Lake City to the transcontinental railroad at Ogden in 1870. They are now part of the collection at the Church History Museum.



been completed, stretching from Salt Lake south to Sandy. On September 23, 1872, the track reached Lehi, which remained the terminus for over a year.

Brigham Young encouraged the Saints to help finance Church-supported rail companies by purchasing stock or bonds. Church members in Utah County were encouraged to donate time or funds to enable completion of the line to Payson. Utah County bishops were assigned tasks associated with the unfolding phases of construction, and their respective ward members graded rail beds, supplied ties, laid rails, and built station houses. By December 1873, the track had reached Provo.⁷

At this time, Brigham Young solicited Union Pacific to purchase stock in Utah Southern to help finance an additional twenty-seven miles of track to York in northern Juab County. The road reached York, located about fifteen miles north of Nephi, on April 1, 1875. This remained the terminus for two years, and a daily train ran from Salt Lake City to York and back, carrying freight, passengers, and

mail. Buggies and wagons ferried passengers and freight between the York station and Nephi. In 1877 rail

construction toward Nephi resumed, and on May 3, 1879, the first train from Salt Lake City arrived at Nephi.⁸





UTAH CENTRAL
RAILWAY—FRISCO,
UTAH. UNION PACIFIC HIS-
TORICAL COLLECTION

Shortly after Utah Central opened for traffic from Ogden to Salt Lake City, residents of Cache Valley began planning their own rail connection. William B. Preston joined other Cache County religious and civic leaders in petitioning Church authorities in Salt Lake to sanction the construction of a rail line from Ogden to Logan and on to Soda Springs, Idaho.⁹ The proposed line would not only facilitate travel and move agriculture products to market more efficiently, but would tie together the Latter-day Saint communities in northern Utah and southern Idaho.

John W. Young assumed leadership of the project and went to New York seeking financial help. He gained a promise from brothers and business partners Benjamin and Joseph Richardson to finance the venture if local Utah residents would do the grading and lay the track and ties. After Brigham Young received assurance that the Richardson brothers were not seeking control of the proposed railroad, the Utah Northern Railroad Company was organized on August 22, 1871. Citizens along the line agreed to receive stock in the company in exchange for their labor. Local bishops were responsible to recruit workers.¹⁰

On August 26, 1871, ground for the new railway was broken at Brigham City, and work began on the stretch from Brigham City to Logan. Men from Hyrum were assigned to cut trees in Blacksmith Fork Canyon, hew log sections into ties, and haul finished ties to the roadbed using their

own teams and equipment. Other men building the road base also used their own teams, plows, and scrapers.¹¹ Elder Franklin D. Richards requested that Saints from Weber and Cache counties be responsible for constructing the rail segment that would connect Ogden to the Utah Northern line at Willard. In response to Richards' request, much labor and some cash were pledged.¹²

The line from Willard to Brigham City and then on to Logan was finished February 4, 1873.¹³ By June three additional lines had been completed. The first was a branch line from Brigham City to Corinne, tying Utah Northern to Union Pacific; the second was the main line from Ogden to Willard; the third was the line from Logan to Franklin, Idaho. About half the total \$1,400,000 cost was met through the labor and cash donations of people living in communities along the line.¹⁴ Many workers had agreed to accept pay in railroad vouchers, which, early on, could be redeemed for cash. But even before branch lines were completed, Utah Northern had run out of funds. When workers stopped trying to redeem their railroad vouchers, Church leaders stepped in. Rather than allowing workers to go without pay—as had happened during construction of the transcontinental railway—the Church redeemed the vouchers in exchange for railroad stock and other compensation.¹⁵

Out of money, the directors of Utah Northern could not extend the line—as originally planned—from Franklin to Soda Springs, Idaho. Financier

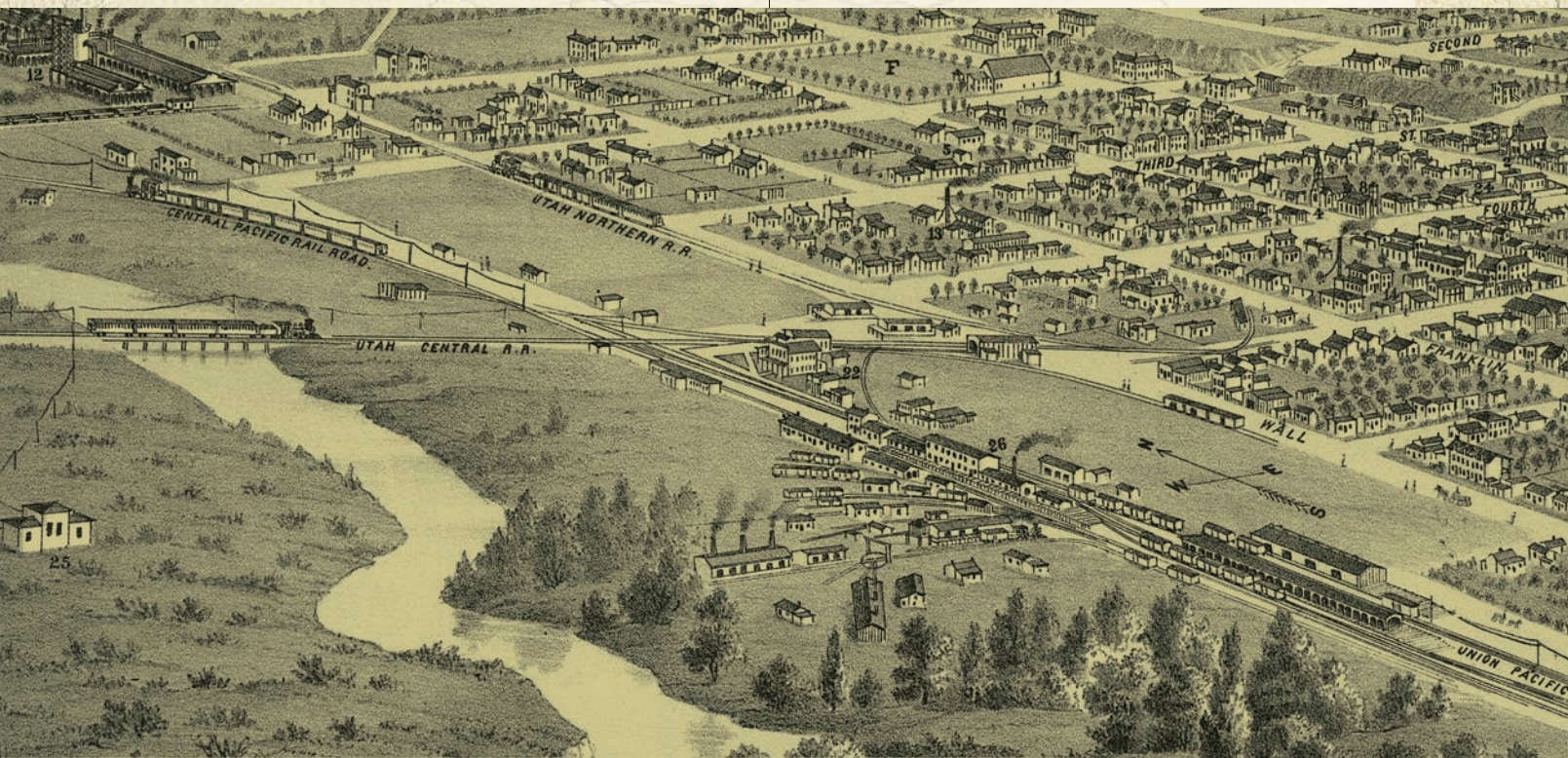
Jay Gould seized the opportunity to purchase Utah Northern bonds held by the Richardson brothers, buying out their share for \$400,000. Some local stockholders also sold their shares to Gould—who, in turn, sold his interests in Utah Northern to Union Pacific. In December 1877 Utah Northern defaulted on over \$1,000,000 due in bond payments and interest. In April of the following year, S. H. H. Clark, general superintendent of Union Pacific, bought the assets of Utah Northern Railroad at auction for \$100,000 and incorporated it as the Utah and Northern Railroad Company.¹⁶ As a subsidiary of Union Pacific, Utah and Northern quickly expanded into Idaho and Montana, eventually tying in to the Northern Pacific and Great Northern lines of the Pacific Northwest.¹⁷

In 1874 the Utah Southern Extension Railroad Company was organized to lay tracks deeper into Utah's southwest. Its founders had dreams of taking the line as far south as St. George, but, for a variety of reasons, construction was delayed until 1878. And by 1879 the tracks only extended to Chicken Creek, barely fourteen miles south of Nephi.¹⁸

In mid-1878 officials of the Horn Silver Mine at Frisco in Beaver County negotiated with Sidney

Dillon, Jay Gould, and S. H. H. Clark of Union Pacific to form a second incarnation of the Utah Southern Extension Railroad Company. Financial negotiations soon followed between Union Pacific and officials of the Church of Jesus Christ. By early 1879, work began on extending Utah Southern Railroad south from Chicken Creek (Juab County) to Milford (Beaver County), with a branch line connecting Milford to Frisco and nearby mines. All lines were completed by late June 1880, and soon an average of 50 tons of ore were being shipped daily from Frisco to the Franklyn (later Horn Silver) Smelter in southern Salt Lake County.¹⁹

When completed, the Utah Central (Ogden to Salt Lake City), Utah Southern (Salt Lake to York), and Utah Southern Extension (York to Frisco) lines were consolidated on July 1, 1881, as Utah Central Railroad System. Union Pacific owned controlling interest of the company, but Utah Central operated independently of other Union Pacific lines. The company's track extended from Ogden to Frisco—a distance of 280 miles.²⁰ While "Gentiles" who operated mining and smelting businesses used this line heavily, it was also a tremendous boon to Latter-day Saints, tying many Utah communities together, enabling efficient shipment of produce and livestock, and pro-



sanpete valley
RAILROAD—UTAH
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

viding easy passenger
access to many of
Utah's counties.

The Utah Central,
Utah Southern, Utah Southern Extension, and Utah
Northern lines were the largest of what were com-
monly known as “Mormon Railroads”—railways
built, managed, and maintained by local members
of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
But these four were certainly not the only histori-
cal railways with Latter-day Saint roots. There were
dozens of others, built for a variety of purposes,
sometimes in cooperation with parties outside the
Church. They also came in a variety of sizes, and
some “Mormon Railroads” were very small indeed:
one boasted only 3.41 miles of main track. While
nearly all were commercial systems transporting
passengers or freight, some provided side tracks to
mines, mills, and other industrial sites.

For example, when the Utah Southern line
reached Sandy, Utah, in September 1872, the
Wasatch and Jordan Valley Railroad was formed to
build two spur lines—one from the Utah South-
ern station in Sandy to the granite quarry in Little
Cottonwood Canyon owned by the Church of
Jesus Christ and the second from Salt Lake Depot
to Temple Square. To this point, the granite blocks
slowly forming the Salt Lake Temple had been
transported by oxcart over a twenty-mile dirt road
connecting the quarry to the temple site. After April
1873—when the respective spur lines were com-
pleted—this time-consuming, laborious, and often
dangerous transport process became much simpler
and quicker. Though small, the new rail company
was successful, maintaining three engines, fifty flat
cars, one passenger car, and a baggage car.

The Sanpete Valley Railroad was organized in
1881 as a subsidiary of the newly incorporated Cen-



tral Pacific Coal and Coke Company which owned
several coal mines near Wales in Sanpete County.
The Sanpete Valley line was planned as a link from
these mines to Nephi. The Sanpete Valley Company
completed its original narrow-gauge track in 1882.²¹

However, the company's success was almost
immediately threatened when the Denver and
Rio Grande Company completed its railroad to
Utah in March 1883. Denver and Rio Grande also
owned Utah coal mines, but their mines contained
a superior quality of coal that sold at a cheaper
price. Over the next year, Sanpete Valley extended
its tracks southward into Sevier County to facilitate
agricultural and livestock shipping in Sanpete and
Sevier counties. The company also extended its
service to Manti in 1888 as the primary narrow-
gauge feeder to the Denver and Rio Grande.²² The
Sanpete Valley Railroad thus became and remained
closely connected to the local economy and culture.
Early on, when the company had no passenger
cars, for example, it allowed passengers to ride in
a baggage or freight car. The engineers, who were
local men, courteously stopped at street corners to
pick up passengers.²³

By 1892, however, the company was begin-
ning to feel the pinch of competition from Denver
and Rio Grande, and in 1908 Denver and Rio
Grande Western purchased Sanpete Valley Railroad,
operating it as a branch line.²⁴ In turn, Denver and
Rio Grande became key to the development of the
coal mining industry in Utah, and coal production
helped fuel Utah's economic growth from the 1880s
through the late 1940s. Rail transportation allowed
even some marginal mines to become profitable.²⁵

OGDEN RAILWAYS, 1875—ONLINE BY DON STRACK



The failure of the Southern Utah Extension to reach Iron and Washington counties remained a frustration and disappointment. As early as 1854 Elder Erastus Snow had publicly expressed his wish for a railroad which would enable the success of the Iron Mission in Iron County.²⁶ Over subsequent years a variety of railroad options were considered, railroads that would enhance the success of iron and coal mines in Iron County, assist in the development of oil fields at Virgin, increase timber harvests on the Kaibab Plateau, or stimulate mineral production in Kane County.

In 1888 the development of precious metal mines at Stateline and Gold Springs—both northwest of Modena in Iron County—motivated the laying of track from Milford across the Escalante Desert. Track-laying was completed to the Utah-Nevada state line by July 1889.²⁷ Every dozen-or-so miles along the line, “sidings”—or small stations—were established; the most important were at Modena, Beryl, and Lund. Each became a new town which grew around the rail station. Modena became the main shipping point for western Washington County, Beryl for northern Washington County. Lund was crucial to the success of Iron County farmers and ranchers who delivered their produce and livestock there for shipping to California or Salt Lake City.

But Lund was forty miles northwest of Cedar City, and the two were connected by a poor dirt road whose upkeep was a constant concern, a road almost impassable after winter snows or spring rains. Not surprisingly, Iron County residents from Paragonah to Kanarraville continued to pray for a railroad spur to Cedar City. But it wasn’t until June 1923 that Union Pacific completed a spur line into

the county. A “completion ceremony” was held just days later, and United States President Warren G. Harding and his wife, together with an entourage of government, Church, and railroad officials, ceremoniously opened the new rail line before 6,000 onlookers.²⁸

For many years passenger service was the main revenue producer for Cedar City’s spur line. From Cedar City, the Utah Parks Company provided bus-touring services to visitors wanting to take in what was being called the “Grand Circle”—the National Parks and National Monuments of southern Utah and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. After the end of World War II, highways were improved, automobiles were becoming more comfortable, and gas and tires were no longer rationed. Passenger travel on trains declined dramatically, and in 1968, all passenger rail service to Cedar City and Milford was discontinued. But the legacy established through the Union Pacific spur line and the Utah Parks Company continues through the present, and tourism still fuels the economies of Iron and Washington Counties.²⁹



UTAH PARKS COMPANY BUS AT CEDAR BREAKS, UTAH, CIRCA 1950—SEE “THE UTAH PARKS COMPANY” ONLINE AT FRONTIER HOMESTEAD.ORG

GREAT SALT LAKE & HOT SPRINGS RAILROAD—

UTAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY



It is, of course, impossible to list all the early Utah railroads. Utahns of a certain age may remember taking the Bamberger line to Lagoon or riding the Salt Lake City Electric line. Or they may recall the Salt Lake and Fort Douglas Railroad or the short line to Saltair. Or they may remember waiting at a railroad crossing for a long train to pass, a train of ore-filled cars traveling north from Iron County to Geneva Steel in Orem. While the routes of some former lines are replicated by today's FrontRunner and by UTA lines to Salt Lake International Airport and the University of Utah, many Utah railroads now exist only in memory.

In Utah, the completion of the transcontinental railroad at Promontory Summit on May 10, 1869, marked the end of the early pioneer era. For many Utahns, however, the construction of the subsidiary

and branch rail lines known as the "Mormon Railroads" was fully as significant. These roads brought low-cost transportation and shipping to the state, connected the various local regions of Utah to the outside world, and facilitated immigration into Utah. They were also key to Utah's economic growth through mining and industry, agriculture and livestock, tourism, and national defense. Without its rail history, Utah would not be as prosperous, diverse, and populous as it now is nor as well positioned within the webs of national and international freight traffic.³⁰

Those early Utahns—most of whom were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—who built or managed or worked for the "Mormon Railroads" deserve our sincerest gratitude and honor. ▣

1 Kate B. Carter, ed., *Our Pioneer Heritage*, v. 10 (1967), 138.

2 Ibid.

3 *Millennial Star*, 11 Jan 1870.

4 *Deseret News*, 11 Jan 1870.

5 Ibid.

6 Carter 142–3.

7 Carter 146.

8 Pearl D. Wilson, June McNulty, and David Humphries, *A History of Juab County* (1999), 73–4.

9 W. B. Preston to Brigham Young, telegram, 15 Aug 1871, Young Papers, Church History Library (CHL), Salt Lake City, UT.

10 *Deseret News*, 24 Aug 1871.

11 Carter 153.

12 CSeearter 155.

13 At least in part for financial reasons, the Utah Northern Railroad Company initially employed a narrow-gauge track

width of 3'6" (as opposed to the standard-gauge width of 4'8.5" [1435 mm]); locomotives and cars were purchased from the Denver and Rio Grand Western which also used a 3'6" narrow-gauge track. See Carter 155.

14 *Deseret News*, 15 Jun 1873.

15 Carter 156–7.

16 Carter 137.

17 *Deseret News*, 31 Dec 1879.

18 Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (1958), 282.

19 *Deseret News*, 18 Apr 1880; David F. Johnson, "The History and Economics of Utah Railroads," Wain Sutton, ed., *Utah: A Centennial History*, vol. 2 (1949), 827; Daughters of Utah Pioneers of Beaver County, *Monuments to Courage, A History of Beaver County* (1947), 289.

20 Carter 167.

21 H.S. Kerr, "Sanpete Valley Railroad," in

Carter 168.

22 Richard Francaviglia, "Rather Curious One: Remembering Utah's Sanpete Valley Railroad," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 1.1 (Winter 2003): 159.

23 Francaviglia 168–9.

24 Francaviglia 169–70.

25 Ibid.

26 Andrew Karl Larson, *Erastus Snow: The Life of a Missionary and Pioneer for the Early Mormon Church* (1971), 253.

27 Janet Burton Seegmiller, *A History of Iron County: Community Above Self* (1998), 178.

28 Seegmiller, 403–6; *Iron County Record*, 29 Jun 1923.

29 Seegmiller, 403–6; Dena S. Markoff, *The Dudes Are Always Right: The Utah Parks Company in Zion National Park, 1923–1972* (1980), 204.

30 Don Strack, "Railroads in Utah," paper in author's possession, 13.



JOHN SHARP

Railroad Pioneer



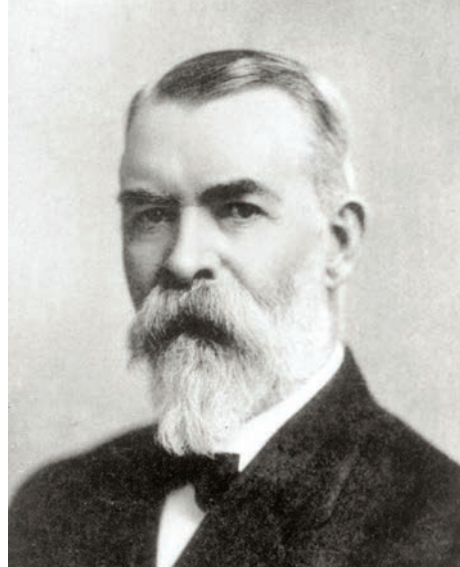
GOLDEN SPIKE CELEBRATION—

BY LARRY CONRAD WINBORG © 2019.

BY BOB FOLKMAN

When the completion of the Pacific Railroad (known later as the Overland Route and then as the Transcontinental Railroad) was celebrated at Promontory Summit on May 10, 1869, Brigham Young was in southern Utah. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was officially represented at Promontory by three men: John Sharp, Chauncey West, and Lorin Farr. Sharp was subcontracted by Brigham Young to grade the Union Pacific roadbed from Echo Canyon through Weber Canyon and then on west to the connecting point with the Central Pacific. Farr and West, along with Ezra Taft Benson, had contracted with Central Pacific to construct Utah sections of that railway as it progressed east toward Promontory.¹

The only American immigrant of the three, Sharp perhaps traveled farthest, geographically and figuratively, to achieve prominence and prosperity in Utah Territory. John Sharp was born in 1820 in the mining region of Clackmannanshire, Scotland. At age eight he went to work in local coal mines and continued in that employment for nearly twenty years. He married Jane Patterson in 1840, and they were soon blessed with two sons. In 1847, John became the first of his extended family to join the Church, but because of his zeal, many other family members followed in his footsteps. In 1848 members of the extended Sharp family determined to escape the hopelessness of



the coal mines by obeying the call to help create a new Zion in the United States. John Sharp and his wife and two sons, his parents, his two younger brothers, and other relatives entered the US through New Orleans. Traveling north to St. Louis by steamboat, they settled temporarily among other Latter-day Saints preparing to make the journey to Utah. To raise the funds needed to buy wagons, teams, and other supplies, the three Sharp brothers—John, Adam and Joseph—found familiar work in Missouri coal mines and remained there for nearly two years.

Shortly, John was called as branch president of the Saints gathered in St. Louis. It was a difficult time for them, as a cholera epidemic infected and took the lives of many persons, including John's mother, Mary Hunter Sharp. John and other Church leaders spent long hours ministering to ill and poverty-stricken Saints. When the time came for the Sharp families, relatives, and close friends to leave for Utah, John was chosen captain of their small wagon company. Despite his lack of experience, he ably led the independent company of forty-nine pioneers (including six infants) to Salt Lake City, arriving in August of 1850.

John's first employment after arriving in the Valley was with the Salt Lake City



Public Works Department as a laborer in the rock quarries. He had cultivated strong leadership skills during his years mining, and he was soon assigned to direct the hauling of massive pieces of sandstone from Red Butte Canyon to construction sites of the Council House and the Old Salt Lake Tabernacle. Soon he was given additional responsibilities. He oversaw the cutting and hauling of stones from the Church quarry in Little Cottonwood Canyon to the Salt Lake Temple site where they were used for the temple's foundation and the wall around the temple block. After several years he became the assistant superintendent of public works under Daniel Wells.

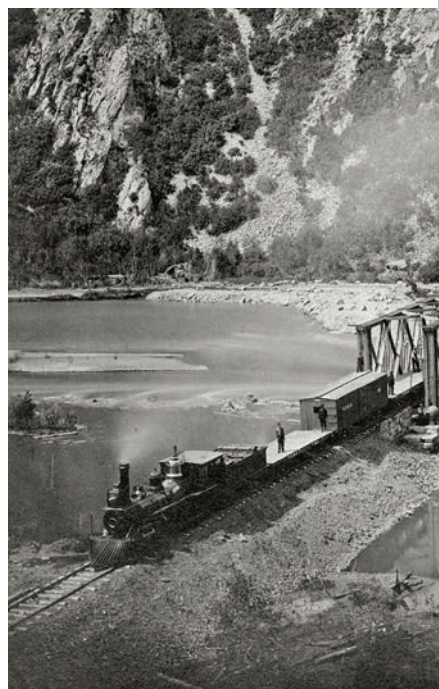
In 1856 Sharp was appointed the first bishop of the Salt Lake Twentieth Ward, whose neighborhoods were in the northeast area of the city, and he served in that capacity for twenty-nine years. John married two other women after coming to Utah, Ann Wright Gibson in 1854 and Sophia Smith in 1861. Sharp became the father of twenty-eight children.

John Sharp established himself as a capable manager, businessman, and local politician in Salt Lake City. He engaged in freighting and related enterprises and for a time served as a city councilman. In 1868 when Brigham Young took the contract to build the last difficult miles of Union Pacific railway through the Wasatch Mountains, Sharp partnered with Brigham's son Joseph A. Young to form Sharp & Young and become a subcontractor for the work. Brigham's plan was that Latter-day Saint men would be able to earn good wages as railroad construction workers and Latter-day Saint settlements along railways would prosper. Sharp & Young took the contracts to grade the rights of way from east of Echo Canyon west through Echo and Weber Canyons and then still further west to a junction with the Central Pacific. Brigham's subcontractors were to excavate or fill rights-of-way—to prepare the railbeds on which track-laying gangs would subsequently lay rails—and cut three tunnels through Echo Canyon. They would build trestles and bridges as needed to cross sharp chasms in the narrow Weber Canyon and make several crossings of the Weber River.

Sharp directed the work and at times had as many as fifteen hundred men working long days on the tunnels and grades. The consensus of all observers was that the Latter-day Saints' work was first class and was often accomplished ahead

of schedule.² John Sharp's management skills were such that he continued to work in construction and management of railroads for the rest of his life.

While the Sharp & Young Company and their employees did excellent work, they—and the other Utah subcontractors and workers—went unpaid when both Central Pacific and Union Pacific defaulted on their obligations. In 1869 John Sharp, Joseph A. Young, and John Taylor were assigned the daunting task of traveling to Boston to negotiate settlement of payments owed by Union Pacific to Latter-day Saint contractors. After difficult negotiations, they returned to Salt Lake City with only a partial settlement, but one of important consequence—several hundred thousand dollars' worth of rails, equipment, and rolling stock that would be used to build the Utah Central Railroad linking Salt Lake City to Ogden and the transcontinental railroad. Sharp was one of the subcontractors who built the Utah Central; later he was one of the builders of the Utah Southern railway, the line running from Salt Lake City to Milford, Utah. In 1871 Sharp became superintendent of the Utah Central Railway. Because of relationships he developed over time with managers and directors of Union Pacific, Sharp was named a Union Pacific director, a position he held until his death. When ZCMI was organized in 1870 Sharp was a founding shareholder; he remained actively involved in its management throughout his life. He was also among the founders of Deseret National Bank and served as bank president until his death.





STONE
QUARRY FOR
THE CON-
STRUCTION
OF THE
SALT LAKE
TEMPLE—

TUNNEL #3,
WEBER
CANYON,
UTAH—

PHOTO BY AN-
DREW J. RUSSELL,
CA. 1868–69.
LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS



Sharp was widely respected as a man valiant in his testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and as a nationally known businessman of integrity and courage. But he found himself in a difficult position when, following the passage of the Edmunds Act in 1882, the US Government stepped up prosecutions of men in polygamous marriages. In 1884 Illinois jurist Charles S. Zane arrived to fill appointments as a justice of the Utah Territory Supreme Court and as judge of Utah's Third District Court. Zane had little patience with Latter-day Saints practicing polygamy. Because polygamy—or “unlawful cohabitation”—was now a misdemeanor punishable by a \$500 fine and up to six months in prison, many Church leaders went underground to avoid arrest and inevitable conviction. Those who were arrested were advised by the Church to plead not guilty to the charges of unlawful cohabitation. As a result, many were convicted, fined, and sent to the state penitentiary. Men who had served their sentences also risked re-arrest if they again cohabited with their wives after their release.³ But in 1885 John Nicholson, associate editor of the *Deseret News*, surprised many by pleading guilty. Shortly thereafter Bishop John Sharp was arrested and charged with unlawful cohabitation. To the dismay of many prominent Saints, he also pled guilty and paid a \$300 fine, Sharp went further by publicly agreeing to abide by the law in the future, and thus escaped a prison sentence. He made the following statement to the court:

“I have so arranged my family relations as to conform to the requirements of the law, and I am now living in harmony with the provisions in relation to cohabitation as construed by this court and the Supreme Court of the Territory, and it is my intention to do so in the future until an overruling Providence shall decree greater religious tolerance in the land.”⁴

Unfortunately, this action placed him at odds with other Church leaders who saw their pleas of not guilty as protests against anti-polygamy laws they considered unconstitutional. As a result of his action, Sharp was requested to resign from his calling as bishop after nearly thirty years in that position. For a time, John Sharp was keenly disappointed by the ostracism he felt from friends and Church leaders. But within a year, ill-feelings toward him had generally passed, and he was again often in the company of Church leaders and former friends. He provided railroad passes for President John Taylor while Taylor was in hiding, and in 1888 he accompanied several general authorities to attend the dedication of the Manti Temple.

Sharp's health began to fail in the late 1880s, but he remained active and alert until a few weeks before his death in 1891. At his funeral Elder Heber J. Grant gave the invocation and Elder John Henry Smith was the central speaker; many prominent business leaders and politicians attended, including Judge Charles Zane. John Sharp left a large and accomplished posterity, as did each of his siblings who had joined the Church with him in Scotland four decades previously. ▣

1 The city of Farr West, Utah—created from the division of Harrisville in 1890—was named to honor the contributions of Lorin Farr and Chauncey West to religious and civic affairs in Weber County.

2 Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Utah* (1889), 754.

3 For an interesting study of the prosecutions of Latter-day Saint polygamists after 1884 see James B. Allen, “‘Good Guys’ versus ‘Good Guys’: Rudger Clawson, John Sharp, and Civil Disobedience in Nineteenth-Century Utah,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 48.2 (1980): 148–74.

4 James G. Bleak, “Manuscript History of St. George,” Book B. Cited in Nels Anderson, *Desert Saints: The Mormon Frontier in Utah* (1942), 317.



THE ONLY RAILROAD IN THE WORLD

BY RONALD G. WATT

When I was growing up in Price, Utah, there was no other railroad in the world except the Denver and Rio Grande Western. Even though I lived two miles away from the train's nearest route point, I could hear its whistle as it went through Price in the middle of the night. My parents taught us caution and respect for the train as it roared through town at the extremely dangerous crossing at Carbon Avenue. While waiting for the train to pass, my sister and I would count the cars and try to read the rail company name on the side of each car. Sometimes there were cars from eastern railroads.

Later, as a teenager, I rode the passenger train—the *Prospector*—from Price to Salt Lake City and back again. I bought my ticket at the Price Depot, which is no longer there. Although the train stopped at every tiny town along the way, it was an exhilarating ride. We would enter Price Canyon, travel through two tunnels, climb all the way to Soldier Summit, then roll smoothly down the Gilluly Loops, through Spanish Fork Canyon, and across the valleys of Utah and Salt Lake Counties, finally arriving in Salt Lake City. To me there was only one railroad in the world, and that was the Denver and Rio Grande Western.

Denver and Rio Grande

The histories of the Denver and Rio Grande—and of the Denver and Rio Grande Western stretching from Colorado into Utah—are complex. I will not burden readers with details of name and design changes, expansions and cutbacks, or financial intrigues. I want to tell a different story.

The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad was launched in October 1870 by General William J. Palmer, a former Civil War US Army officer who had been instrumental in building the Kansas Pacific Railway. Palmer's dream was to build





OVER THE JORDAN RIVER, SALT LAKE VALLEY—DENVER AND RIO GRANDE WESTERN RAILROAD.

a railroad connecting Denver and northern Mexico. He traveled to the East to obtain financing and then hurried back to Denver to make final preparations for his new railroad.¹

Palmer's railway pushed southward to the Colorado-New Mexico border, but the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe had arrived first. Over the next several months both rail companies hired gunslingers to protect laid track and rights-of-way, but the disputes were eventually settled in court. After paying the incredible sum of \$1.5 million for rights along the Arkansas River's Royal Gorge, the D&RG established its identity as the railroad that would service the lucrative, high-altitude mines across the Rocky Mountains.

D&RG completed its track to Grand Junction in March 1883. Originally Palmer entertained grandiose ideas of building a railroad from Grand Junction to Los Angeles. The company actually completed a railroad bed to Buckhorn Flat—now covered by Buckhorn Reservoir—a point in Emery County, Utah, about 120 miles due west of Grand Junction.² At that spot, the crew constructed a wye, the southwestward point directed toward Salina Canyon and the northwestward toward Price. Some reports suggest that the grading was completed on the northwestward branch nearly to Price. But then the workers were told to abandon the project and return to work on the main line near the Utah-Colorado border, which was then pushing westward toward present-day Green River.³

The Denver and Rio Grande entered Utah from Grand Junction along the Grand River Valley and then continued through the flat desert land between Cisco and Green River, following roughly the same route as today's I-70. Towns with names like Westwater, Cisco, White House, Elba, Sagera, Thompson Springs, Floy, Solitude, and Green River sprang up overnight. For a time, Westwater was larger than Moab.⁴

While the D&RG did not extend as far south as Moab, a number of Moab residents assisted with the construction to the north. The D&RG followed the lead of other railroads in placing foreign advertisements for workers, and the workers came. Men of many nationalities—whites, Italians, Chinese, Japanese, and blacks—created the rail beds and laid the first tracks. These men would be joined by Greeks and South Slavs later on. Some of the immigrants later returned to their homelands with their savings, but many stayed.⁵

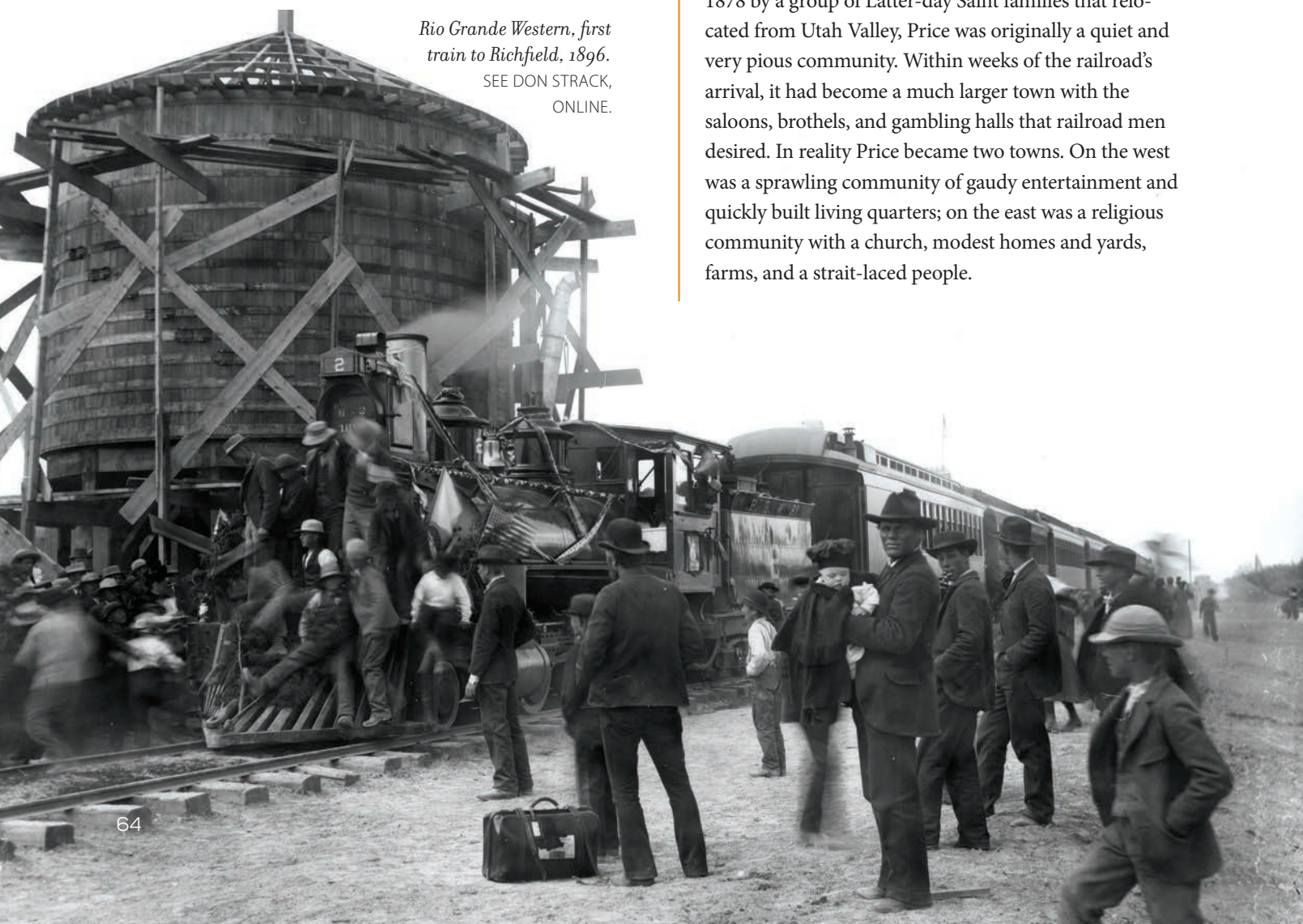
Rio Grande Western, first train to Richfield, 1896.

SEE DON TRACK,
ONLINE.

The Denver and Rio Grande Western

In 1881 Palmer had incorporated a subsidiary company, the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad, in Utah. He bought out Salt Lake and Park City Railway, Sevier Valley Railroad, and Utah and Pleasant Valley Railroad and merged these with his new company. The D&RGW then began the process of connecting Salt Lake City to the D&RG line to the south. The first fifty-mile segment, from Salt Lake City to Springville, was finished in 1881. The Utah and Pleasant Valley Railroad, now owned by D&RGW, operated a line from Springville to Tucker in Spanish Fork Canyon. Shortly, D&RGW began laying rails through the rest of Spanish Fork Canyon and then down through Price Canyon. Because the latter is a rather narrow gorge, workers blasted out several tunnels and changed the course of Price River in the process.

Somewhat predictably, the arrival of the railroad in Price altered the nature of the town itself. Settled in 1878 by a group of Latter-day Saint families that relocated from Utah Valley, Price was originally a quiet and very pious community. Within weeks of the railroad's arrival, it had become a much larger town with the saloons, brothels, and gambling halls that railroad men desired. In reality Price became two towns. On the west was a sprawling community of gaudy entertainment and quickly built living quarters; on the east was a religious community with a church, modest homes and yards, farms, and a strait-laced people.





Rio Grande Western Railroad Depot, Helper, Utah, 1895. UTAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

On March 30, 1883, crews of the Denver and Rio Grande and the Denver and Rio Grande Western met at Desert Siding, fourteen miles west of Green River, and the last spike was driven to join the rails from Denver to Salt Lake City, a total of 735 miles.⁶ Initially, both the D&RG and the D&RGW were narrow-gauge railroads. By 1887, however, Palmer realized that if his rail companies were to be competitive and fiscally sound, he would have to switch to standard gauge. After ordering 21,000 tons of steel rails, twenty-seven locomotives, and a proportionate number of freight and passenger cars, Palmer began rebuilding tracks in Colorado.

The process began in Utah in 1889, employing 600 workers on an ongoing basis to widen the railroad from Grand Junction to Salt Lake City.⁷ Where possible, the new standard-gauge line was laid about two miles south of the narrow-gauge line, keeping the narrow-gauge line operating while the new track was being laid. This meant that towns like Cisco, Westwood, and Cottonwood were effectually moved south to the new line along with their stations.⁸ Because some mountain passes didn't allow for an alternate rail route, the narrow-gauge bed had to be widened to accommodate the new rails. The new standard-gauge railway was finally completed in 1908, and the entire line used the name Denver and Rio Grande Western.⁹

Helper, Utah

Because Helper, Utah, began as a railroad town, it may provide the best example of what life in an eastern Utah rail town was like. Like other rail towns in the region, Helper was positioned near mines—in this case, coal mines—and was also a mining town. Most people in

Helper were long-term residents, staying put for two or three generations. They persisted and changed just as the railroad and the mines did.

Even the name “Helper” originated with the railroad. Because standard-gauge rails accommodated heavier rail cars with greater load capacities than

narrow-gauge rails, Palmer's switch to standard gauge created a problem. A Salt Lake-bound train now needed an extra locomotive to pull its cars up the steep grade through Price Canyon to the crest at Soldier Summit. Thus, in late 1886 D&RGW designated the site of a new station where a helper engine could be attached to a train headed up Price Canyon. Situated at the base of the canyon, Helper was ideally suited to its namesake role.

By mid-1887 the railroad had built twenty-seven residences in Helper and a bunkhouse for rail men passing through. Temporarily, a narrow-gauge boxcar served

My maternal grandparents lived about ten miles south of Price near the Emery County line, and I spent part of my summers with them growing up. As a teenager, while walking one day along the west side of Miller Creek Road, I was scanning the topography of the land and saw what appeared to me to be a railroad grade. Looking further, both north and south, I could pick out faint traces of that same path. Many years later when I read the book, *Utah's Ghost Rails*, I knew that I had found what was probably a segment of the planned D&RG railroad bed to Los Angeles, the grade that Rio Grande crews had constructed and abandoned seventy years earlier. I have ventured to that spot multiple times in the last few years to search for that old railroad grade, but it has been obliterated by wind and water. Today the area around the old grade is dotted with farms and even a subdivision.

as the station.¹⁰ Within five years, a fifteen-stall round-house, a new depot, a reading room for employees, and a hotel were in operation, and Helper's small business district had three saloons, a grocer, and a clothing store. Electrical power arrived in 1894, the same year two water reservoirs were constructed. By 1900 Helper's population was 402.¹¹

In 1907 Helper became an incorporated town with a mayor and a town board, prospering because of its railroad station and rail yards and because of the city's location at the center of regional coalfields. Spur lines extended in all directions to the mines. By 1910 the population had increased to 900.

By 1920 Helper was a lively town of more than 1600 residents, and its 1922 business district featured six hotels; four restaurants; three grocery stores, a fish market, and a butcher; a bank; a weekly newspaper; a telephone office; clinics belonging to a dentist, a doctor, and a chiropractor; a lawyer's office, and two barber shops. Larger businesses included Lowenstein's Mercantile, a branch of J. C. Penney, Helper Mercantile, Helper Lumber Company, and O.H. Wilson Selling Company, a wholesaler. The business district was anchored by as many as twenty-six saloons.⁹⁹ Helper also had a Catholic church and an elementary school. The railroad chapel, a non-denominational building, served the Latter-day Saints, Methodists, and Episcopalians for many years until these congregations could construct their own church buildings.

Helper was known for its ethnic diversity, a greater

diversity than in any other town in Utah. The US Census for 1900 shows residents of sixteen different nationalities, with the largest number—forty-four—coming from Italy.¹⁰⁰ Additional laborers, including Japanese and Greeks, arrived in town during the United Mine Workers strike in 1903-04. When the strike ended, some former strikebreakers remained in Helper, opening small shops or establishing farms along the Price River or in Spring Glen. By the mid-1920s Helper's residents represented twenty-six different nationalities and twenty-seven different native languages.¹⁰¹

Dr. J. Eldon Dorman, a local ear, nose and throat specialist during the mid-twentieth century, recalled the town's energy on payday Saturday: "The streets and stores were crowded with a polyglot population, pushing and crowding, with two dozen or more languages from Arabic to Zulu filling the air. People of all sizes, colors, and descriptions mingled in the noisy streets, laughing and joking as they spent their hard-earned cash." Dorman added that, especially on Saturdays, the Greek coffee houses were crowded and the town's two dozen saloons were "filled to capacity, with bar patrons lined up two deep, the gaming tables full and the slot machines playing sweet music to the owners' ears." Loud conversations in Italian, Slavic, and other languages "added to the cacophony of the city's streets."¹⁰²

Perhaps the difference between Helper and the rest of Utah is best underscored by an apocryphal story about one of Helper's Italian residents who left to

*Denver and Rio Grande Western
climbing Soldier Summit, 1911.*

PHOTO BY HARRY SHIPLER. SEE DON
STRACK, ONLINE.





Rio Grande Western Railroad, Soldier Summit. SEE DON STRACK, ONLINE.

work on the highway being built through Spanish Fork Canyon. Enduring homesickness as long as he could, he finally went to the paymaster and demanded his pay, declaring, “Son of a Beech! I no like-a these-a United-a States. I wanna go back to Helper.”¹⁰³

Soldier Summit

In 1919 the US Railroad Administration, which assumed management of the nation’s railroads during World War I, moved some railroad facilities from Helper to Soldier Summit. When the D&RGW resumed control of its systems in March 1920, it dissembled the nine-car engine house in Helper and reconstructed it at the summit. It also built a new depot, rail offices, and five- and six-room cottages for its workers in the Soldier Summit valley, together with a six-room schoolhouse. By the fall of 1921 the school had hired five teachers, and two hundred students were enrolled.¹⁰⁴

The Soldier Summit mountain valley was a beautiful place to live from early spring through late fall, but winters proved difficult at an elevation of 7,440 feet. Employees were continually clearing snow from the main railroad line and, following each storm, shoveling out rails, buildings, and homes. At times snow levels rose above doorframes, and the poorly constructed buildings were almost impossible to heat, hosting icicles several feet long. Some winter snows were so deep that residents built tunnels between their homes and outhouses or coal sheds.¹⁰⁵

By 1925 the town had a population of just over 3,000 and had spread over the small valley and up to the very

top of the mountain. In 1929, shortly before the onset of the Great Depression, railroad officials reversed their earlier decision and began moving the station back to Helper. The cold and the snow had conquered. The original cost of moving the community to Soldier Summit was \$800,000. The cost of moving it back to Helper was \$1,581,000.¹⁰⁶ It was an interesting experiment, but it failed miserably.

The End of the Denver and Rio Grande Western

In 1935 the Denver and Rio Grande Western slipped into bankruptcy. The company did not regain solvency until after World War II, but by the early 1950s it was enjoying moderate prosperity. To make the D&RGW more competitive, corporate leaders developed a “fast-train” model where two or more diesel locomotives pulled shorter, more frequent trains. Coal-fueled locomotives were gradually retired, and by 1965 the changeover was complete.

To better compete with Union Pacific, the D&RGW teamed with the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad (which ran between Chicago and Denver) and the Western Pacific (which ran between Oakland and Salt Lake City). With Western Pacific, the D&RGW developed the *California Zephyr*, offering customers a “rail cruise” with great vistas of the Rockies. Initially the *Zephyr* was very popular, but as ridership declined, it began to lose money. By 1970 Western Pacific canceled its *Zephyr* contract, although D&RGW continued to operate the train as the *Rio Grande Zephyr* on runs between Denver and Salt Lake City. Thirteen years later Amtrack rerouted the train and restored its original name—the *California Zephyr*.

In 1988 Rio Grande Industries, the owner of D&RGW, purchased Southern Pacific Transportation Company and assumed the name Southern Pacific. The new Southern Pacific returned to the old philosophy of running long, slow trains. Then, in 1996, the D&RGW/SP board sold the railroad’s parent company and all its holdings to Union Pacific Corporation. This marked the official end of the colorful 116-year history of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad.

When I grew up in Price there was no other railroad in the world except the Denver and Rio Grande Western. While its name has changed to that of what was once its fiercest competitor, there is still only one railroad that roars through Price and blows its whistle in the middle of the night. ▣

1 Robert G. Athearn, *Rebel of the Rockies, A History of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad* (1962), 122. In 1880 Palmer founded and became the first president of the Mexican National Railway, forerunner of the National Railroad of Mexico and the Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México, an internal rail system in Mexico; its first line, completed in 1888, linked Mexico City to Nuevo Laredo on the US-Mexico border.

2 This Buckhorn Flat should not be confused with the larger valley of the same name in Iron County, Utah, north of Paragonah.

3 Stephen L. Carr and Robert W. Edwards, *Utah Ghost Rails* (1989), 293.

4 Only Westwater, Cisco, and Thompson Springs still exist on a current Utah map, and they are rather pale shadows of what they once were.

5 Athearn 122.

6 Ibid.

7 Nancy J. Taniguchi, *Necessary Fraud, Progressive Reform and Utah Coal* (1996).

8 Richard A. Firmage, *A History of Grand County* (1996).

9 Don Strack, "Railroads in Utah," *Utah History Encyclopedia*, 450–2.

10 "Helper, in the Heart of Utah's Great Coal Fields," *Denver & Rio Grande Western Magazine*, 2 (May 1926): 9–10; Philip F. Notarianni, "Helper: The Making of a Gentile Town in Zion," *Carbon County: Eastern Utah's Industrialized Island* (1981), 157.

11 *Eastern Utah Telegraph*, 28 Aug 1891 and 24 Sep 1891; *Eastern Utah Advocate*, 17 Feb 1898 and 25 Aug 1898; Philip F. Notarianni, "A Tale of Two Towns, Helper and Eureka," PhD diss., U of Utah (1980), 42–60.

12 R. L. Polk's *Utah State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1922–23*, "Helper" (1922), 85–6.

13 Cited in Sue Ann Martell, *Rails Around Helper* (2007), 13.

14 Notarianni, "The Making" 158–9.

15 J. Eldon Dorman, *Confessions of a Coal Camp Doctor* (1995), 38.

16 As quoted in Notarianni, "The Making" 153–4.

17 Martell 83–98.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.



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The U.S. Postal Service released three new Forever Stamps for the 150th anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad



Stanford swung and missed, striking only the rail. It made no difference. The telegraph operator closed the circuit and the wire went out, **"DONE!"**

Across the nation, bells pealed. Even the venerable Liberty Bell in Philadelphia was rung. Then came the boom of cannons, 220 of them in San Francisco at Fort Point, a hundred in Washington DC, countless fired off elsewhere. It was said that more cannons were fired in celebration than ever took part in the Battle of Gettysburg. Everywhere there was the shriek of fire whistles, firecrackers and fireworks, singing and prayers in churches. The Tabernacle in Salt Lake City was packed to capacity with an astonishing seven thousand people. In New Orleans, Richmond, Atlanta, and throughout the old Confederacy, there were celebrations. Chicago had a parade that was its biggest of the century—seven miles long, with tens of thousands of people participating, cheering, watching.

Stephen E. Ambrose, Nothing Like It in the World, 366.

